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THE WORKS

OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

LIMITED EDITION

XIV.

MEMORIES OF A MAN OF LETTERS

ARTISTS' WIVES

ULTIMA

Of the LIMITED EDITION of Alphonse Daudet one thousand copies have been printed for America.

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THE WORKS OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

MEMORIES

OF A

MAN OF LETTERS

TO WHICH IS ADDED

ARTISTS' WIVES

AND

ULTIMA

TRANSLATED BY

GEORGE BURNHAM IVES

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

BOSTON
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1899

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CONTENTS.

Memories of a Man of Letters.

	Page
Émile Ollivier	1
Gambetta	11
History of my Books.—Numa Roumestan	31
The Francs-Tireurs	43
The Garden on Rue des Rosiers	50
An Escape	56
Summer Palaces	64
The Shipwreck	72
History of my Books.—Kings in Exile	77
A Reading at Edmond de Goncourt's	96
Actors and Actresses.—Déjazet	109
Lesueur	111
Félix	114
Madame Arnould-Plessy	116
Adolphe Dupuis	120
Lafontaine	124
Notes upon Paris.	
The Nounous	131
The Ridiculous Salons	145

PAGE

IN THE PROVINCES.

A MEMBER OF THE JOCKEY CLUB 151
THE GUÉRANDE RACES 158
A VISIT TO THE ISLAND OF HOUAT 165

Ultima.

ULTIMA 175

Artists' Wives.

PROLOGUE 221

I. MADAME HEURTEBISE 231
II. THE CREDO OF LOVE 240
III. LA TRASTEVERINA 247
IV. A FAMILY OF SINGERS 256
V. A MISUNDERSTANDING.—*THE WIFE'S VERSION* . 264
V. A MISUNDERSTANDING.—THE HUSBAND'S VERSION 265
VI. ACTS OF VIOLENCE 276
VII. BOHEMIA EN FAMILLE 286
VIII. FRAGMENT OF A WOMAN'S LETTER, FOUND ON RUE NOTRE-DAME-DES-CHAMPS 293
IX. A GREAT MAN'S WIDOW 300
X. THE LIAR 307
XI. COMTESSE IRMA 315
XII. THE CONFIDENCES OF A COAT EMBROIDERED WITH GREEN PALM-LEAVES 322

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

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Alphonse Daudet . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Émile Ollivier 1

Léon Gambetta 11

Edmond de Goncourt 96

Émile Augier 153

INTRODUCTION.

IN the introduction to *Thirty Years in Paris*, I attempted to present a hasty sketch of Alphonse Daudet's literary work, as represented by his published books, down to the appearance of *Jack* in 1876, that being the last of his books whose "history" is printed in that volume. He tells us that he was already at work on *The Nabob*, when a chance suggestion from Gustave Droz led him to lay it aside for the moment and set about writing a novel founded upon the story of his unhappy friend Raoul. "On that day," he says, in the history of *Jack*, "laying aside *The Nabob*, which was already in process of construction, I started off upon this fresh scent with a feverish haste, a trembling at the ends of the fingers, which seizes me at the beginning and end of all my books." And in the *Journal des Goncourt*, under date of Sunday, March 21, 1876, Edmond de Goncourt writes: "During our long walk I talked with Daudet of the novel he has in his head, in which he intends to introduce Morny incidentally."

Thoroughly exhausted by the labor of composing the longest and the "most quickly written"

of all his books, he went with his wife and son to recruit in the balmy sunshine of the Mediterranean, amid the violets of Bordighera. That his hours there were not passed solely in idle contemplation we have gratifying evidence in the twenty-fourth chapter of *The Nabob*, which he attacked anew after his return from the Riviera.

The Nabob was published by Charpentier in 1877 and marked a departure from the author's previous methods in the matter of publication, in that it had not previously appeared in serial form in any journal. Some episodes, however — the *Death of the Duc de M——*, for instance, and *A Nabob* — which were included in *Studies and Landscapes*, originally published with *Robert Helmont*, as noted in the introduction to *Thirty Years in Paris*, reappeared in the novel amplified and elaborated.

The 37th edition — that is to say the 37th impression of the original edition — dated 1878, contains for the first time the "Declaration by the Author," which will be found in the present edition. In the "history" of *Fromont and Risler*, printed in *Thirty Years in Paris*, Daudet refers to his original dedication to the *Nabob*, of which Madame Daudet modestly declined to allow the publication, and which "I retained only in a half-score of copies presented to friends, now very rare, which I commend to collectors." The dedication was printed by M. Henri Céard in an annual publication, the *Étrennes aux Dames*,

for 1884. It will be found in translation, as a note to the passage just mentioned, on page 201 of *Thirty Years in Paris;* but it may not lack interest in its original form and typographical arrangement.

"Au collaborateur dévoué, discret
et infatigable,
A ma bien-aimée Julia Daudet,
j'offre avec un
grand merci de tendresse reconnaissante
ce livre qui lui doit tant."

"*The Nabob*," says Henry James,[1] "is not a sustained narrative, but a series of almost diabolically clever sketches." This sentence states, it seems to me, as concisely as it can be stated, the reason that, while some detached portions of the book are more generally admired than anything else that Daudet ever wrote, it is seldom placed, as a whole, at the head of the list by professed critics, although it is one of the four which in the opinion of Mr. Matthews "form the quadrilateral wherein Daudet's fame is secure." The criticisms called forth by this same "diabolical cleverness," as displayed in drawing the characters of the Nabob and the Duc de Mora, were evidently the moving cause of the "Declaration by the Author," which he was inclined, he says, to place at the beginning of the book when it was first published. If one compares what Ernest Daudet has

[1] *Partial Portraits*, page 234.

to say of his brother's connection and his own with François Bravay,[1] with what the author himself says in this "declaration," one must certainly acquit him of any unfair use of his model. As to the Duc de Mora, we are once more obliged to regret the reticence which Ernest Daudet imposed upon himself, because he did not "care to take the edge off that part of my brother's memoirs which he will devote to" the relations between M. de Morny and himself. Such memoirs as we have, alas! tell us much more of the relations of Villemessant or Henri Rochefort with the President of the Corps Législatif than of Daudet's own; indeed, the last page of this Declaration is almost the only reference we have to the subject. But what are the facts as we know them? He held a subordinate position, a sort of secretaryship in the *Bureau* of the Corps Législatif, from 1860 until soon after the death of the Duc de Morny, in 1865, when he carried out a project which he had long debated, the project of recovering his liberty. "As soon as it appeared that the independence of his ideas might be compromised, he left the Corps Législatif," says his brother. "Is it necessary to add that during the stay which he made in that office he never either wrote a line or performed an act which could be considered in the light of a sacrifice of that same independence to the demands of his situation?" When he left that office he ceased

[1] *My Brother and I*, pp. 424 et seqq.

to take any part in politics except as a patriotic citizen, and twelve years later he introduced, in a novel purporting to delineate Parisian society and manners in the closing years of the Second Empire, the one public character who was, next to the Emperor, perhaps even more truly than the Emperor, the perfect incarnation of that society and those manners. He drew him, not ill-naturedly, but as he had seen him in his more or less familiar intercourse with him: "I always saw him with that smile on his face, nor had I any need to look through keyholes; and I have drawn him so, as he loved to appear, in his Richelieu-Brummel attitude. History will attend to the statesman. I have exhibited him, introducing him at long range in my fictitious drama, as the worldly creature that he was and wished to be; being well assured that in his lifetime it would not have offended him to be so presented."

"It may well be that he was right," says a recent critic.[1] Now, inasmuch as there is no reason to think that he was not right, or that the picture was overdrawn, and as the whole gravamen of the accusation against Daudet was that he had abused the situation he occupied under M. de Morny, the answer to the criticism seems to leave nothing to be desired.[2]

[1] M. René Doumic, *Portraits d'Écrivains.*

[2] I quote once more and at greater length in this connection the entry of March 21, 1876, in the *Journal des Goncourt:* "During our long walk I talked with Daudet of the novel he has in his

There is an interval of more than two years, interrupted only by an unimportant one-act comic opera, *Le Char*, between *The Nabob* and *Kings in Exile*, which was Daudet's next offering to the public. It was published by Dentu, late in 1879, having previously appeared as a serial in *Le Temps*, August 15th to October 10th of that year. The long interval is partly explained by the fact that he was at work more or less on other matters and published a considerable number of detached pieces in newspapers and reviews, many of which have since been collected in these volumes of memoirs and in other volumes. But, as he himself tells us, during the composition of *Kings in Exile* his health, never robust, became seriously and permanently impaired, and thenceforth his pen worked more slowly and his genius became less prolific than ever.

The novel had a great and instantaneous suc-

head, in which he intends to introduce Morny incidentally. I dissuaded him from doing that. The Morny whom he had the good fortune to know and gauge should be, in my opinion, the subject of a special study, a study in which he can exhibit one of the characters which best represent the period. He exclaimed at the foolish, bourgeois sides of the man. I told him that he must be very careful not to attenuate them, that one of the peculiarities of this age is the pettiness of men and the restless movement of things; that if he attempts to make him an absolutely superior person, he will produce a Maxime de Trailles or a de Marsay — familiar characters in many *Scenes* of Balzac's *Human Comedy*; — in a word, he will construct an abstraction. He must represent the great diplomat of the secret manœuvres of the Interior with his flavor of pawnbroking, of the *littérateur* of the Bouffes. And Daudet thought my advice good."

cess; the only criticism to which the author specifically refers is that of Vallès, and that seems to have been purely literary and to have shown no trace of the venomous spirit which prompted the later criticisms of the play founded on the book, wherein Daudet was bitterly assailed, being charged, among other heinous sins, with political tergiversation. The insinuation referred to by him, that his book was begun as a bit of flattery to the rising hopes of the monarchists during the presidency of MacMahon, and that, after the fall of the Marshal he suddenly changed his tune and turned to the "triumphant republic," was somewhat ingenious on its face, as MacMahon resigned on January 30, 1879, when the book probably was begun, but not finished; but it becomes utterly absurd when we consider that the first feuilleton did not appear in *Le Temps* until five months after the "fall of the Marshal," when any such attempt to flatter the dynasty as was alleged against the early portions of the book would have been most untimely and ill-judged; so that Daudet's refutation of the charge is hardly needed, although it is no less conclusive than vigorous and telling.

Of the very few characters whom Daudet introduces in more than one of his novels, two first appear in *Kings in Exile:* Colette Sauvadon, the wife and widow of Prince Herbert de Rosen, whose great wealth furnishes the motive of much of the action of *The Immortal;* and Doctor Bouchereau, who plays a somewhat prominent

part momentarily in the last chapters of *Sappho.* The only other of Daudet's creations who figures in more than one book (always excepting Tartarin of Tarascon) is Astier Réhu, *the* Immortal, who is introduced in *Tartarin on the Alps* as a typical Cook's tourist.

The annoyance to which Daudet was subjected by the persistent attempts to furnish "keys" for his novels and to find a living original for each of his leading characters, seems to me to have been an inevitable consequence of the "personal note" which runs through all his work and goes far to explain its charm. Inventing but little, as he himself said, but narrating and describing what he had actually seen, taking part personally in the action of his stories, mingling therewith the reflections aroused by the events he describes,[1] often addressing his characters and his readers in the second person, he could hardly expect that the secret of his method would not be suspected, or that the critics would not vie with one another in supplying "keys" for characters and incidents alike.

The controversy waged most fiercely over *The Nabob*, *Kings in Exile* and *Numa Roumestan*, although it seems that there are more characters drawn from life in *Jack* than in any other of the novels. But the originals of Jack himself, of Doctor Rivals, d'Argenton, Belisaire and Mangin were not public characters, like the Duc de Morny, François Bravay, Sarah Bernhardt, Taglioni and

[1] M. René Doumic, *Portraits d'Écrivains.*

the English charlatan who really sold pills *à base arsénicale:* like Gambetta and Numa Baragnon; or like the various dethroned monarchs who honored Paris with their presence, and who were supposed to have sat for the portraits of Christian and Frédérique. With the publication of the "histories" of the different books the warfare came to an end so far as concerned the identity of the characters specifically mentioned by the author, but continued to be waged with renewed vigor around Daudet's treatment of Morny and Bravay, and the disputed identity of Félicia Ruys, as to whom we are still left to conjecture to determine whether she represents Sarah Bernhardt or Judith Gautier. — In an article published in the *Bookman* shortly after the death of Daudet, it is said that "in his *Memories of a Man of Letters* Daudet himself states, what everybody knew, moreover, that his Queen of Illyria was the ex-Queen of Naples, who had been living in Paris since the conquest of her kingdom by Garibaldi and Vittorio Emmanuele."[1] As a matter of fact, Daudet expressly denies what he is here said to assert. "As the King and Queen of Naples lived for a long time on Rue Herbillon, it was commonly alleged that I had intended to describe them; but I declare that *nothing of the sort is true*, and that I drew a purely imaginary royal couple in an authentic stage-setting."

One instance of a character drawn from life, not

[1] *History of Kings in Exile*, infra, page 81.

cited by Daudet himself, is most characteristic of his method. You remember Passajon of the easy conscience, the cashier of the Caisse Territoriale in the *Nabob*. In *My Brother and I*, Ernest Daudet describes an uncle from Lyon who came to live with the family at Nîmes. "I really believe that, without knowing it, he posed as one of the characters in *The Nabob*. In that novel there is a certain cashier in the Caisse Territoriale who has a terrible likeness to him."

It may have been this uncle to whom Daudet referred when he told Goncourt, soon after the first appearance of *The Nabob*, that he was already in trouble with some of his family.

Another interval of two years elapsed before *Kings in Exile* was followed by *Numa Roumestan* (Charpentier, 1881), in which Daudet went once more to his Midi for his hero and thereby involved himself in more trouble of the same sort that had followed the appearance of *Tartarin*. Even his friends, the Félibres, took fire, he tells us, and maltreated him in their poetry, but Mistral remembered that "the lioness bears no grudge to the whelp that scratches her a little in play."

Numa Roumestan is dedicated "to my dear wife," — "a dedication which has always brought me good fortune, and which should stand at the beginning of all my books." It has always been ranked among the most successful of its author's works and forms the third side of the "quadrilateral upon which Daudet's fame rests

secure," in the opinion of Mr. Matthews, two others being formed by *The Nabob* and *Kings in Exile* among the books we have thus far considered.

In this same year, 1881, *The Nabob*, a play in seven tableaux, the first to be published of the dramas founded on Daudet's novels, was issued by Charpentier. It was written in collaboration with Pierre Elzéar, and had been performed for the first time at the Vaudeville, January 30, 1880. It should be said that the play founded on *Fromont and Risler*, in which Daudet's collaborator was Adolphe Belot, had been acted at the Vaudeville as early as September 16, 1876, but it was not published until ten years later.

In 1882, *Jack*, a play in five acts, by Daudet and H. Lafontaine, was published by Dentu; it had previously been produced at the Odéon, January 11, 1881.

In the following year, 1883, the dramatization of *Kings in Exile* was published, and, probably in that year, represented at the Vaudeville. Although Daudet speaks of Delair as his collaborator, he seems to make it plain that he had no part in the actual construction of the play, and Delair's name alone appeared on the title-page; but, as he tells us, the assaults of the critics were all aimed at the author of the book, and it seems clear that they seized upon the failure of the play as a pretext for attacks which the enthusiastic reception of the novel by the public had deterred them from mak-

ing upon it. That the play was a failure there can be no doubt. It is a curious fact that this is the only one of the novel-plays to which Daudet refers in his histories; and he refers to this only to tell us how completely it failed; and that "criticism followed the public, which is its rôle to-day." In truth the non-success of these plays seems to have been as marked as the success of the books upon which they were founded, although *Fromont and Risler* possessed vitality enough to cross the Atlantic.

The Evangelist was published by Dentu in 1883, after another interval of two years since *Numa Roumestan*, having previously appeared in feuilletons in *Figaro*. It is one of the less well known of Daudet's books, so far as my experience goes; certainly less well known than it deserves to be. It is especially interesting as being the first of his longer works in which the author confines himself to the development of a single theme; thus establishing a very distinct line of demarcation between it and the "galleries of pictures brushed in with the sweep and certainty of a master hand, — portraits, landscapes with figures, marines, battle-pieces, bits of *genre*, views of Paris," — to which his public had become accustomed.

The *Evangelist* was followed, in 1884, by *Sappho*, the first edition of which was published by Charpentier in 1884. It had previously appeared in the *Écho du Paris*, beginning with the number of April 16 of that year. The dedication of *Sappho* —

"for my sons, when they shall have reached the age of twenty-one" — indicates clearly enough Daudet's own conviction that this somewhat painful story is a moral story in the true meaning of the word; indeed, there is no other of this author's books wherein a salutary and necessary moral is so emphatically enforced. — "The author of *Sappho*," says M. Doumic, "who hitherto had hardly seemed inclined to preach to his contemporaries, invites them, on this occasion, to take their share in the horrible lesson." — *Sappho* forms the fourth and last side of Mr. Matthews's quadrilateral.

In *Sappho*, as in *The Evangelist*, M. Daudet confined himself to the development of a single theme. "He undertook to prove that he was capable of composing, and of composing from within, of producing a work . . . which should exhibit veritable *unity*. He succeeded."[1] In the later of these two books he produced what is in many respects the strongest of all his works.

In 1886, the second series of Tartarin sketches, *Tartarin on the Alps*, *New Exploits of the Hero of Tarascon*, was published by Calmann Lévy, profusely illustrated with *aquarelles*, sixteen of which were full-page and in colors, — a handsome octavo much more sumptuous than the ordinary original edition of its author's books. *Tartarin on the Alps* has achieved a popularity which would be considered extraordinary measured by any other standard than that established by its famous predecessor.

[1] M. René Doumic, *Portraits d'Écrivains.*

The Belle Nivernaise, the Story of an Old Boat and its Crew, was issued in the same year (1886) by Marpon and Flammarion, the same octavo volume containing five shorter sketches, *How Farjaille Went to Heaven, The Fig and the Sluggard, The First Coat, The Three Low Masses* and *The New Master.*

The First Coat is an episode of *Little What's-His-Name, The Three Low Masses* had previously appeared in the second edition of *Monday Tales*, to which collection it is restored in this edition, and *The New Master* was one of the two previously unpublished pieces in the collection entitled *Contes et Récits* (Polo, 1873), described in the introduction to *Thirty Years in Paris.*

The production of the play founded on *Fromont and Risler* at the Vaudeville in 1876 has already been referred to. In 1886, March 11, it was revived at the *Gymnase*, and in the same year was published by Calmann Lévy. The published text differs materially from that of the play as acted in 1876, which was never published.

The two volumes of memoirs, if we may so designate them, *Thirty Years in Paris* and the present volume, were both published in 1888, by Marpon and Flammarion.[1] In the same year, but between

[1] In 1891, the 18th and last volume of the Lemerre edition of the *Works of Alphonse Daudet* was issued, containing under the title of *Thirty Years in Paris* all the articles printed under that title in this edition, and, in addition thereto, the following articles contained in the first edition of *Memories of a Man of Letters* and now printed in this volume: *Émile Ollivier* and all the sketches

the two, came *The Immortal*, with the imprint of Alphonse Lemerre. It had first appeared in *L'Illustration*, May 5 to July 7, 1888. Of this first edition (unillustrated), a very large number of copies was printed. The brief preface by the author, closing with his famous declaration: "I am not a candidate, I have never been a candidate I shall never be a candidate for the Academy," first appeared in the 56th thousand. Beginning with the 67th thousand there are two corrections: *Three Charles the Fifths* instead of *three parchments* and *Under the Emperor's Signature* instead of *Under Charles the Fifth's Signature.*

In 1890 Lemerre issued an illustrated edition in which there are other variations from the original text, notably the almost universal substitution of *confrère* for *colleague.* "No other of the author's works," says M. Brivois, "has undergone so many corrections, nor has any other been so severely criticised."

Two years elapsed between the publication of the present volume and the appearance of the third and last instalment of the adventures of the "Illustrious Tartarin." Late in 1890 Dentu issued *Port-Tarascon*, in an octavo volume profusely illustrated and with a number of full-page plates. A noteworthy fact in connection with this story is that it had originally appeared in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* (June–December, 1890), in

of *Theatrical People;* it also contained the "history" of *Robert Helmont*, now published as a preface to that work.

the form of a translation by Mr. Henry James; it was then accompanied by all the illustrations found in the bound volume except those relating to the legend of the Antichrist.

It has become the fashion to speak somewhat disparagingly of this concluding volume of the Tartarin trilogy, but it may well be that this fashion, like some other fashions, has been more than a little overdone. I quote on this subject one of the most highly esteemed of French critics, who is favorably known in this country. Writing in 1895, M. Francois Coppée says: "Beyond question he (Alphonse Daudet) has long since assured his hold upon glory and upon posterity Had he written the three *Tartarins* alone — I say the three, for the judgment of the public was, in my opinion, unjust and too cold to *Port-Tarascon* — had he done nothing more than that threefold narrative, in which he revealed a new type of comic character, Alphonse Daudet would be, none the less, the Cervantes of our literature." [1]

In this year of *Port Tarascon* Daudet published his first essay in the dramatic line, without collaboration, since the utter failure of *Lise Tavernier* in 1872. *The Struggle for Life*, in which the fortunes of Paul Astier of the *Immortal* are followed from the period at which the novel closes to his shameful and fitting death, had been first performed at the Gymnase-Dramatique, October 30,

[1] *Mon Franc-Parler*, 3d series, p. 321.

1889. Before its publication by Lévy it had appeared in the number for November, 1889, of *Les Lettres et les Arts*, an illustrated review published by Boussod and Valadon. Although, as Mr. Matthews says, the "freshest and most vigorous" of Daudet's plays, it has not been altogether successful.

In the same year (1890) *Numa Roumestan*, a play in five acts and six tableaux, founded upon the novel of that name, was published by Lemerre. Daudet's name appeared alone on the title-page. The play seems to have been neither more nor less successful than the earlier ones of the same class.

In 1891 *Rose and Ninette*, was published by Flammarion, and in the same year the same house published the *Obstacle*, a play in four acts, which had previously been performed for the first time at the Gymnase, December 27, 1890.

An interval of two years was followed by nothing of more importance than a dramatization of *Sappho*, in which Adolphe Belot collaborated (Charpentier and Fasquelle, 1893), and an adaptation of *La Menteuse*, one of the sketches published in this volume under the title of *Artists' Wives*, in the shape of a play in three acts (Flammarion, 1893). In the latter the original is amplified and elaborated; the title-page bears the name of Léon Hennique as joint author with Daudet. *Sappho* had been acted for the first time at the Gymnase on December 18, 1885, and revived on the same stage

November 12, 1892, in which latter year *La Menteuse* was first acted, also at the Gymnase.

La Menteuse was the last dramatic work of Daudet to appear during his life-time; it may be said that in 1888 a dramatization of *Tartarin on the Alps*, by Bocage and de Courcy, was performed at the Gaîté; and that the last year of Daudet's life (1897) witnessed the production of a second version of *Sappho*, a "lyric drama," libretto by MM. Henri Cain and Bernède, music by Massenet.

In 1894 a collection of nine "studies of theatrical life," under the general title of *Between the Flies and the Footlights*, was published by Dentu in the *Petite Collection Guillaume*. These studies had previously appeared in periodicals, but I have been able to locate definitely only one of them, the *Dream of Madame d'Épinay*, which may be found in the issue for 1885 of the *Étrennes aux Dames*, an annual publication, of which five numbers were published, 1881 to 1885. This collection will be found in the volume containing *Sappho*.

It will thus be seen that in the four years since *Port Tarascon* Daudet had published nothing of the first importance, and almost nothing of any sort; and while the few volumes we have catalogued do not represent all of his work in those years, it is none the less true that his activity in all directions had sensibly diminished. It seems to be the fact that this falling off in the volume of production

was due entirely to his enfeebled health; and yet, although there was no improvement in that regard but constant retrogression during the last three years of his life, he produced more in those three years than in any equal period since the time of *The Evangelist* and *Sappho.*

In a note written after his essay had gone through the press, M. Brivois (his preface is dated December, 1894) records the fact that the *Little Parish Church* had been in process of publication in *L'Illustration* since October 20 of that year. He also states that "the *Revue de Paris*, in its supplement of November 15, announces that it will publish M. Alphonse Daudet's next novel, *Fifteen Years of Married Life.*" I can find no trace of this last mentioned work,[1] but *The Little Parish Church* was issued by Lemerre in 1895 and once more fixed public attention upon its author. "He returns to-day," says a recent writer, "to the vein of the *Evangelist* and *Sappho*, with *The Little Parish Church*, inferior in some points, equal for the most part to those two masterful works, and, as a whole, worthy to complete a *groupe d'élite.*"[2]

[1] *Journal des Goncourt*, Saturday, July 22, 1893.—"In our walk this morning, Daudet, talking of the book he has begun, *Fifteen Years of Married Life*, confided to me that a process of evolution is taking place in his mind similar to that which has taken place in mine: disgust with the everlasting adventure, with the everlasting complication of plot in novels." This date, it will be noticed, is a year and a half earlier than the announcement of the *Revue de Paris.*

[2] Gustave Larroumet, *Études de Littérature et d'Art*, 4th Series, 1896.

"I am not now writing a literary criticism," says M. Coppée in the article cited above, "nor indeed am I called upon to comment a novel (*The Little Parish Church*) which is in every hand. I simply desire to pay my tribute of admiration to our great and dear Daudet, still indefatigable and fruitful with all his suffering."

In 1896 a collection of sketches, which took its title from the first of them, *La Fédor*, was published by Flammarion, and in the same year *Arlatan's Treasure*, a somewhat longer, tragic little tale of the plains of Camargue, by Charpentier and Fasquelle. All of these are published in the preceding volume, *Thirty Years in Paris*, and are referred to in the introduction thereto. *Ultima*, the touching description of the close of M. Edmond de Goncourt's life, which will be found in this volume, was contributed by M. Daudet to the *Revue de Paris* of August 15, 1896.

With *The Support of the Family*, which was the longest and most elaborate novel he had given to the world since *Kings in Exile*, and which had surely been very long in the making,[1] Alphonse Daudet brought his life-work to a close. He died on the 16th of December, 1897, when the last proofs of the novel had barely been read and when he had just written the last word of a play founded upon *The Little Parish Church*, which he had undertaken in collaboration with Léon Hen-

[1] He seems to have been at work upon it in August, 1896. See *Ultima*, *infra*.

nique. The novel was published by Charpentier in 1898.

A word may be said here as to three collections of detached portions of Daudet's works, published at various times under the title of *Contes Choisis*. The first bore the imprint of Charpentier and the date 1877, and had for a sub-title *La Fantaisie et l'Histoire*. The second was published by Jouaust in 1883, and the third by Hetzel in 1884. All were illustrated, — the last, which was called a "special edition for the use of the young," — most profusely. No one of the three contained anything that had not been previously published in book form, and much of the contents consisted of extracts from the novels.

We learn from the *Journal des Goncourt* that Daudet had at more than one time entertained the idea of founding a review (to be called the *Revue de Champrosay*), "in which he would be ready to embark 100,000 francs, and in which he would gather our friends about him and pay for copy at a rate no editor has ever offered heretofore. He sees in *interviews* — interviews of a different sort from those reported in the newspapers — a wholly novel method of intellectual propagation, a method which he is very anxious to employ, not limiting it solely to the questioning of literary men. — It is a good idea," is Goncourt's comment, "and with his storehouse full of ideas Daudet would make an excellent editor of a review." [1]

[1] *Journal*, January 4, 1891.

The idea came to nothing.

Of the several articles collected in this volume under the title of *Memories of a Man of Letters*, there is little to be said. They had been published in the *Monde Illustré* under this same title, but a majority of them had appeared previously to that publication, and none, I believe, later than 1881. Five — *The Francs-Tireurs*, *The Garden on Rue des Rosiers*, *The Summer Palace*, *An Escape*,[1] and *The Shipwreck* — in all of which the date of composition is indicated, were originally included among the *Lettres à un Absent* (1871); the others had appeared in the *Temps*, *Globe*, and *Voltaire* at various times in 1878, 1879, 1880, and 1881.

Émile Ollivier has passed so completely from the public eye in twenty-five years, that it is hard to realize that he is still living. He stands third on the list of members of the Académie Française, to which he was elected to succeed M. de Lamartine in 1870, only a few months before his cowardly retirement from the government, when war with Prussia was flagrant. M. Legouvé, elected in 1855, and now in his ninety-second year, and the Duc de Broglie, elected in 1862, are his only seniors in length of membership in the ranks of the Immortals. He was for a time director of the Academy in succession to M. Thiers.

Gambetta was one of Daudet's earliest friends in the capital, as he has told us in the first chapter of

[1] In the *Lettres à un Absent* the title of this sketch was *Les Évadés de Paris*.

Thirty Years in Paris, when describing his experiences in the old Hôtel du Sénat. This appreciative and admiring sketch of his career and character was written for the *Novoë Vremya* of St. Petersburg about four years before Gambetta's untimely death. To my mind the passage describing Gambetta's performance at the Bazaine trial, with its frank acknowledgment that the coolness which made it impossible for the writer to congratulate the orator was chargeable entirely to his, the writer's, own lack of justice, depicts a trait of Daudet's character which goes far to explain why he was, as was said of him in his lifetime, "beloved of all men." [1]

The profound affection which united Daudet and Edmond de Goncourt, who was the older of the two by nearly twenty years, but died little more than a year before his friend, was one of the most important facts in the last twenty-five years of the younger man's life. It seemed as if he had, in some sort, taken the place in the old man's heart of that younger brother, Jules, whose death, its cause and its effects, are so feelingly described in the article entitled *A Reading at Edmond de Goncourt's*. In January, 1898, the *Revue Encyclopédique* published a collection of articles by different hands concerning Alphonse Daudet, then recently deceased, and his work, the first of which, *Alphonse Daudet Intime*, was written by Messieurs Paul and Victor Margueritte, brothers and

[1] M. René Doumic.

collaborators of enviable and constantly growing reputation. In that description of Daudet as his friends knew him, the figure of Goncourt constantly appears, evidently a most essential element of the younger man's private life. There is a charming picture of the house at Auteuil, so frequently described, from which Goncourt was buried on the day that *Ultima* was written, and of the *Grenier*, where the "Marshal of letters," used to receive his friends on Sunday afternoons. "The house at Auteuil, in those days full of marvellous things, is nought but an empty tomb. The hangings are torn down, the rare furniture, the priceless curiosities removed. All the beautiful things have been scattered here and there, at public sale, under the hammer of the auctioneer, and only the cold bare stone remains. To see again the two noble figures, touching in their friendship, of Edmond de Goncourt and Alphonse Daudet, we must make once more, in imagination, the pilgrimage along Boulevard Montmorency, growling at the noise of the passing trains, to the little house of silence and of toil . . . We reach the second floor, open a black door and enter a double room, hung with red, with a carpet with blue figures; Oriental rugs thrown over the low arm-chairs and the divans; books, etchings on the walls: this is the *Grenier*.

"There we smoke and talk. A tall, white-haired old man rises from the divan at the rear of the room, and receives his visitors with stately grace. Edmond de Goncourt, with his dilated

pupils, his snow-white hair and beard, has one of the noblest faces one can imagine; an aristocratic and military air; 'A marshal of letters,' we have called him. . . . The conversation of the *Grenier* is placid, consisting of reflections, reminiscences. . . . At times we lower our voices, there is absolute silence; friends all, we look at each other as in a house where a dead body is lying. How often we have felt that strange charm, as we sat mute before the gaze of the master, staring fixedly into space! But the door opens. Leaning on his cane, clinging to the arm of Edmond de Goncourt, who goes forward to meet him, Alphonse Daudet enters, crosses the room painfully and sinks upon the divan at the rear. Almost invariable is Goncourt's affectionate query, accompanied by a patting of the arm with his hand: 'Well, little one, how goes it?' And Daudet replies: 'Poorly, my Goncourt,' or 'Pretty well, my Goncourt.' But never 'Well,' for the inexorable malady which torments him no longer gives him any respite from his sufferings. But the pen cannot render the pretty tone of affection of the phrase *little one* in the mouth of the one, and *my Goncourt* in the mouth of the other. *Little one!* You think of the younger brother, the absent, the dead. *My Goncourt!* Daudet says it so gracefully; he, the survivor, is his, twice dear, twice precious. And Edmond inquires of his friend's affairs, of those things which are his life and his life's heart — his family, and his work. Daudet replies in a weary voice, a

sort of sing-song, in which there is the sorrow of a creature of delicate organization who suffers, whose heart is always full, his nerves tense and his soul constantly shaken like a bird upon a too slender branch. Daudet replies, and gradually becomes animated.

"What a strange feeling steals over the auditors! The gray light in the room brightens, the wood crackles more merrily on the hearth, it grows warmer, the *Grenier* seems more inhabited, more alive. A gleam of amusement, of interest, flashes in Goncourt's great eyes. Voices are raised, laughter breaks out. But who is the kindly magician? It is Alphonse Daudet, the invalid, the poor tortured creature, who, with his sempiternal youth, his highly-colored fancy, spreads joy and light abroad, shines like the sun of Provence, in whose beams his face seems to be bathed. The *Grenier* is no longer the reception room where the fire is lighted only on Sundays, the little house is no longer the darkened abode of silent mourning. Broken is the charm of lethargy, that strange sensation of waiting for some one who has gone away. The dead brother has returned, he is sitting yonder, we touch him and speak to him. In Alphonse Daudet he is reincarnate, and Edmond de Goncourt, the taciturn giant, alive once more to the joy of living, says to him with deep emotion, — with the same loving inflection: 'Do you remember, little one?' And the reminiscences take shape in anecdotes. On the subject of the past Daudet is inexhaustible."

Then we are taken to Champrosay, by the route described by Daudet himself in *Ultima;* from the little station of Ris-Orangis, leaving on the right "a toy steeple, that of the *Little Parish Church*, for worthy M. Mérivet's church really exists," by the site of the first house he occupied at Champrosay, the house of Eugène Delacroix, the painter,[1] to the simple and unpretentious home of his later years. "There sits the master, with a happy smile on his face, his cane between his legs and his little felt hat over his ear. Beside him, the fairy of the household, she who is to him the dear friend of every day, sweet, smiling Madame Daudet. And there also, in his high-crowned straw hat, the loyal guest, the elder brother, Edmond de Goncourt, who extends his trembling white hand."

And in the *Journal* too, that formidable *Journal des Goncourt*, in eleven volumes, which raised such a storm about the ears of its author, and by which even Daudet was annoyed, we find on almost every page passages which, however much we may question the propriety of publishing them, bear abundant testimony to the older man's sincere affection and admiration for the author of *Little-What's-His-Name.*

Whatever may be said of Daudet's treatment of the theatrical profession in his novels, it would be difficult to infer any unfavorable bias on his part from the sketches of leading actors and actresses contained in this volume, or from the "theatrical

[1] See the Preface to *Robert Helmont.*

studies" entitled *Between the Flies and the Footlights.* The last paragraph of the last of those studies — *Fanny Kemble* — seems convincing as to his attitude toward the stage-folk of his own country. Of the actors of whom sketches are given in this volume, Dupuis had taken a leading part in the performance of the *Nabob*, and Lafontaine, who was associated with Daudet in the dramatization of *Jack*, played Vaillant in *The Struggle for Life* at the Gymnase, October, 1889.

Madame Arnould-Plessy was still living, in retirement, a year or two ago.

The "rosary of marital infelicities," strung together under the title of *Artists' Wives*, was published in 1874, when Daudet had been seven years married. I have been unable to discover whether any of these had previously been published; but M. Ernest Daudet states, by implication at least, that they were all written after his marriage. He tells us that Alphonse had been deterred from marrying by the fear of some such catastrophe as that described in the first of these sketches. "An expression of this fear *made after his marriage*, will be found in *Artists' Wives*, more particularly in the story which opens that volume, *Madame Heurtebise.*" To my mind the interest of these very vivid and lifelike sketches is greatly heightened by the thought that they were written after their author was happily married to her who, in

his brother's words, "has been the very peace of his hearth, the regulator of his work and the discreet counsellor of his inspiration."[1] In another place he refers to this collection as "one of the less known books, which I recommend to connoisseurs;"[2] and in support of this recommendation and of my own profound impression of the great power of these sketches, I venture to refer to the comments of Mr. Matthews in his General Introduction to this edition of Daudet's works in English.[3]

Of the description of Edmond de Goncourt's last hours, *Ultima*, I have already said enough, in connection with the article on Goncourt. It seems exquisitely fitting that the lonely old man, who never ceased to mourn for his brother except when his heart was cheered and warmed by the sympathetic presence of his friend, should have died beneath that friend's roof, where he was a loved and honored guest.

"Of those brief moments on Sunday mornings we retain the most penetrating, the most delightful memory. They are mingled in our minds with the Dominical Sunday afternoons in the *Grenier* at Auteuil. The Sundays to come will seem desolate to us because of the disappearance of the two masters, whom we admired with our whole soul

[1] *My Brother and I*, page 448.
[2] Page 462.
[3] *The Nabob*, pp. xix–xxi.

and loved with our whole heart: Edmond de Goncourt, Alphonse Daudet." [1]

There are many passages in the *Journal des Goncourt* which indicate that neither Alphonse Daudet himself nor his brother Ernest has given us an adequate account of his early years in Paris, and which explain at the same time the feeling of Daudet toward the famous *Journal*, as described in *Ultima*. It seems that whatever he — or any one else for that matter — might say to Goncourt in a moment of expansiveness or confidence, was inexorably jotted down, to be given to the world some day.

"Daudet has been living in the Lamoignon mansion [2] in the Marais these seven years," says the diarist under date of March 21, 1876. "He tells me that the house has been kind to him, that it has soothed and tranquillized him. In his youth he was fond of excitement, of haunting low places; it was a youth that retained for a long while, as he expresses it, the posthumous waves, the whale's-backs of the sea after a storm. But in that tranquil, placid, soporific house, he has been transformed and, by dint of hard work, has become an entirely different man." — Again, in October 1885: "Daudet talked of the excesses of his youth; a conversation broken by excruciating pains which, from time to time, cut him short and

[1] MM. Paul and Victor Margueritte, *Alphonse Daudet Intime.*

[2] Where he wrote *Fromont* and *Jack.*

caused him to conclude his confidences with these words: 'That he has well merited what has come to him, but that in very truth there was within him an irresistible instinct which impelled him to abuse his physical powers.'"

The vagaries of his boyhood in Lyon, described by himself and his brother, and the privations of his servitude as a school-usher at Alais, to which he always looked back as the most miserable part of his life, must have impaired his constitution at the very outset, so that it was but ill prepared to stand the additional strain of his irregular habits and of his lack of the wherewithal to nourish himself properly. In March, 1886, he and Goncourt dined with Zola. — Daudet talked of his horrible poverty, and of the days when he literally had nothing to eat, and yet enjoyed that destitution, because he felt no load on his shoulders, because he was at liberty to go where he pleased, to do what he chose; *because he was no longer an usher.*

The days of absolute poverty had come to an end when he entered the office of the President of the Corps Législatif in 1860, but his habits still left much to be desired in the way of regularity. As early as 1861, his health, "which had been shaken," says M. Ernest Daudet, "by the violent attacks upon the nerves that life in Paris brings," was so seriously affected that he was sent to Algiers by his physician; in the following year again he had to leave Paris, going then to Corsica; and although we are told that it was prudence

alone, not necessity, which counselled him to start southward again in 1863 — when he did not go beyond Provence — it is clear that neither then nor ever afterward was he a thoroughly sound man. But it is equally clear, and not from his writings alone, that his ill-health had not, in these early years, at all impaired his vitality and animation. A single incident will serve not only to illustrate his temperament but to indicate the nature of his duties under the Duc de Morny and of his relations with him. Once more I have recourse to the *Journal des Goncourt.*

"Sunday, March 16, 1873. — Daudet talked of Morny, to whom he was once a sort of secretary. While sparing him, while disguising, with words of gratitude, that gentleman's lack of real worth, he described him to us as having a certain tact in dealing with mankind and the faculty of distinguishing between an incapable and an intelligent man at first sight.

"Daudet was very amusing and reached the acme of comicality when he described the *littérateur*, the composer of operettas. He told us of one morning when Morny had ordered him to write a ballad, some absurd thing with a jingle after the style of *bonne négresse aimer bon nègre; bon négresse aimer bon gigot.* — When the thing was done and produced by Daudet, in the enthusiasm of the first rendering the presence of Persigny and Boittelle in the reception room was entirely forgotten.

"And lo! Daudet, L'Épine, the musician, ay, and Morny himself, with his skull-cap and in the ample robe-de-chambre in which he aped the Cardinal-minister, one and all leaping over stools, shouting *zim-boum, zim-balaboum*, while the Interior Department and the Prefecture cooled their heels outside."

In 1866, we are told, he was too ill to go to Ville d'Avray with his family, and remained in Paris until he was driven away by an epidemic of cholera; it was during the summer of that year after he had joined his brother at Ville d'Avray, that he met Mademoiselle Julie Allard, to whom he was married early in the following year.

"How did that come about?" he asks. "By what witchcraft was the inveterate Bohemian I then was, caught and laid under a spell?"[1]

"His marriage, he often said, transformed his existence."[2] So indeed it did, to the extent that it put an end forever to his Bohemian days and introduced an entirely new set of interests into his life, hitherto "open to all the winds of heaven, with only brief flights, impulses instead of wishes, never following aught save its caprice and the blind frenzy of a youth which threatened never to end."[3] But the transformation was not to be complete until his marriage had been supplemented by another event, the event which

[1] *Thirty Years in Paris*, page 47.
[2] MM. Margueritte in Rev. Encyc., *ubi supra*.
[3] *Thirty Years in Paris*, page 44.

aroused every vestige of patriotic feeling in the breast of every Frenchman, whatever his politics, and united the nation as it had not been united for many a year. "It" (his marriage) MM. Margueritte continue, "had been, *with the war*, the touch of a magic wand which had caused fresh springs to gush forth within him, had enlarged his horizon. He retained from his domestic life a sort of reflection of kindliness, and from the tragic excitement of the war a boundless store of intense life and burning compassion."

"Daudet said," records Edmond de Goncourt,[1] "that during all those years (including the first years after his marriage, when his wife was learning what the Mont-de-Piété was), he did nothing, was conscious of nothing save the need of living, of living actively, violently, noisily, the need of singing, of making music, of strolling through the woods with a bit of wine in his head. He confessed that in those days he had no literary ambition; but that it was a matter of instinct with him and amused him to jot down everything, to record even his dreams. It was the war, he declared, that transformed him, that finally aroused in the depths of his being the thought that he might die without having done anything, leaving nothing lasting behind him. Thereupon he set to work, and with work literary ambition was born in him."

While this assertion, if correctly reported, is

[1] *Journal*, January 25, 1885.

probably somewhat exaggerated, the effect of the war upon Daudet's work can be detected readily enough by comparing the tone of *Tartarin* and the *Letters from my Mill* with the *Lettres à un Absent*, with those of the *Monday Tales* which relate to the war and its results, and with *Robert Helmont*.

As we know, Daudet failed in none of the duties which he deemed to be those of a patriotic Frenchman in the time of the nation's peril. It is certain that his experiences as a volunteer in the National Guard during the siege of Paris,[1] following close upon the accident described in the Preface to *Robert Helmont*, and the consequent confinement and anxiety, had a most serious effect upon his already broken health. Even so, the work that he had hitherto done was as nothing compared with that which he began to do when, as he told Goncourt, the lacking incentive was supplied and literary ambition was born within him. *Fromont*, *Jack*, *The Nabob*, *Kings in Exile*, and *Numa Roumestan* followed one another in rapid succession, each representing, as he tells us in their respective "histories," an enormous amount of labor of the most exacting kind. After *Jack* was finished he was so exhausted that he was driven to the Riviera for rest, and while *Kings in Exile* was on the stocks his work was interrupted by the attack which proved to be the beginning of the end, though the end was to be long in coming.

[1] See *My Brother and I*, page 453.

To be sure, he rallied, the danger passed away, and he, like Turgénieff, analyzed his sensations for use in describing the death of Élysée Méraut. But he felt thenceforth that "something was broken within him." An entry in Goncourt's *Journal* seems to fix the date of this attack approximately: "Daudet said that he had recently raised a great clot of blood," he writes in 1879. "Some say it comes from the bronchial tubes, others from the lungs."

There is scarcely an entry of subsequent date wherein Daudet is mentioned, in which reference is not made to his health. "Upon my word, that Daudet has the energy of all the devils! He worked all the morning at *Sappho* (the play), notwithstanding the most cruel pains, and he passed all the evening walking about, unable to sit down, from one end of the gallery to the other, leaning on his son's arm, with an occasional giving way of one leg, as if a bullet had broken it." [1]

"'You are better, it seems to me,' I said this morning to Daudet. 'My dear fellow,' he replied, 'you know that in the old days when they crucified a man they used to take out the nails for a moment to make him suffer longer. Well, just at present I am enjoying a moment when the nails are out.'" [2]

It is difficult to find a mention of Daudet by his contemporaries in which there is not some reference to his ill-health. Anatole France speaks of him as

[1] October 6, 1885. [2] June 29, 1887.

"tortured by fifteen years of suffering." Pierre Loti says of him that he displayed "the patience of an heroic martyr," and a recent writer, the last of the eminent Frenchmen who have recently visited this country, primarily to deliver a course of lectures at Harvard University, M. Édouard Rod, observes that "one of the tales which he left unfinished was to be entitled *My Suffering*, and to contain the daily record of the disease which had tortured him for so many years—of that disease endured with admirable, smiling heroism for which we loved him the more dearly."

It is possible to follow with reasonable certainty, although without exact dates, the sequence of Daudet's various residences in Paris, from the garret in the Hôtel du Sénat, to which his brother escorted him on his arrival, to the house on Rue de l'Université in which he died more than forty years later. He tells us in the history of *Little What's-His-Name* that Daniel Eyssette's chamber under the eaves over against the steeple of Saint-Germain-des-Prés is one of the realities of the book, and it was presumably his second home in the capital. During the years immediately succeeding his resignation of his office under government, that is to say from 1865 until his marriage, he lived in the country the greater part of the year; and he seems to have passed nearly the whole of the year 1867, after his marriage, away from Paris, at L'Estérel, Pormieu, and

at the chateau of Vigneux.[1] In the early seventies, when he wrote *Fromont* and *Jack*, he was living in the Marais, in the Palais Lamoignon, and in 1876, as we have seen, he told Goncourt that he had then been living there seven years, so that this was probably his first settled residence in Paris. *Kings in Exile* was written in 1878-79, on Place des Vosges, in an old Louis XIII. mansion described in the history of that book; and *Numa Roumestan* on Avenue de l'Observatoire, where he was living in the spring and summer of 1880. In 1890 he was living on Rue de Bellechasse, and he died on Rue de l'Université. But nowhere else was he so happy as at Champrosay, where he first lived in summer as early at least as 1870, in the house formerly occupied by Eugène Delacroix, the artist, and where he afterward built the modest but charming retreat where Goncourt died in his arms, and where his friends love to think of him.

Having no purpose to discuss the question of "schools" or systems, I have thought that those readers who, like myself, have become deeply interested in the man through his works and a slight knowledge of his career, might care to be informed as to the estimation in which he and his writings are held by his own countrymen, and how he is differentiated by them from other novelists with whom his name is often

[1] See *History of Little What's-His-Name*, in *Thirty Years in Paris*, pages 47-48.

associated, but who, while they may compel admiration of their intellects, repel such affection as Daudet aroused in his readers, as evidenced by this incident among many, told by M. Édouard Rod: "On the day following his death, when all the fashion and celebrity of Paris filed by his bier, a poor man stole timidly to his side and laid a poor little bunch of violets among the sumptuous flowers."

"In the days of his earliest triumphs," says M. Rod, "Alphonse Daudet had for companions in arms three men who were his seniors and who have all disappeared, Flaubert, Edmond de Goncourt and Turgénieff, and one contemporary, M. Émile Zola. . . . They generally met at Flaubert's, whom they admired and who had great influence over them. 'Flaubert thundered,' says M. Zola, who has given us a very vivid picture of these meetings, 'Turgénieff told stories of exquisite savor and originality, Goncourt passed judgment with his characteristic shrewdness and conciseness, Daudet acted his anecdotes with the charm which makes him one of the most adorable companions whom I know.[1] As for myself I could hardly be said to shine, for I am of very moderate ability as a talker.' . . . The author of *Madame Bovary* had reflected much upon the 'genus' novel, in which

[1] "June 27, 1881. Dined at Charpentier's. — Alphonse Daudet is such a captivating talker, such a capital actor of the comedies he describes, that just as I got up to ask if it was eleven o'clock, I heard a clock strike one!" — *Journal des Goncourt.*

all of his guests were rising to fame; and he strove to convert them to his theory. One of the points of this theory — the most essential in his eyes — was, if we may venture to say so, the *impersonality* of the novelist. Flaubert contended that the author should create his characters, then disappear behind them, in order to emphasize the reality of their existence. Goncourt and Turgénieff never submitted unreservedly; M. Zola accepted the theory in all its rigor. As for Daudet, it ran counter to his temperament, and he could never determine to make any sacrifice to it.

"No æsthetic arguments, no thought of a 'school' could ever convert this incorrigible to the 'impersonal method.' Did he discuss it on Sundays with his friends? did he attack it? did he condemn it? I cannot say; but even if he had tried to put it in practice he would not have succeeded and would have impeded his talent to no purpose. From the very beginning and to the very end he threw himself frantically into his books. . . . The best 'receipt' — the only one — to give to writers, as to artists, is simply to find out their proper path and to follow it. Guided by his unerring instinct, Daudet found his without difficulty. . . . It was he who made that charming and profound observation of which artists alone can appreciate the full meaning: 'A man is not the master of his work.' Nor is he the master of his talent. He goes where it leads him. The true 'method' is to allow oneself to be led. Daudet

would have deprived us of the best part of himself, if he had sacrificed his *ego* to the exigencies of the 'impersonal method.' . . .

"Thus the author is constantly blended with his characters. Amid the multitude of his creations his own face stands forth in the foreground, amiable, mobile, charming, *human* above all, in the broadest meaning of that noble word. They who have had the good fortune to know him will always see him as they read his books; he will appear before them as they turn each page, ready to throw himself into his own narrative, to comment on it, to explain it, glowing with the feelings he has described, indignant, delighted, mocking, deeply moved, scornful, indulgent; he will appear to them as they have seen him, as they have loved him, kind to all, heroic against disease, with mind and heart always on the alert, amid the loving and cherished ones who comforted him in his suffering and created a sort of radiant atmosphere about him. They who have never seen him will divine his personality without difficulty, and, as they pass from volume to volume, will come to know him through and through, and he will remain, or will become their friend. For . . . he wrote with love in his heart, and they who read him will love him."[1]

"This realist," says M. Jules Lemaître, "is cordial. He loves; he has compassion; he does not disdain. He has kept himself free from that brutal

[1] *Nouvelles Études*, etc., *passim*.

and contemptuous pessimism which is so fashionable, and which is called, no one knows why, 'naturalism.' . . . For kindly folk, you see (and for others too), Daudet possesses one gift which dominates everything: 'charm'; and to that simple yet mysterious word we must come at last when we speak of him."

"I knew Alphonse Daudet before his hours of glory and suffering," says Anatole France. "And I do not believe that any human creature has ever loved nature and art with a more ardent and more generous love; has ever enjoyed the world with more intensity and more affection. And the marvellous feature of it all is that such an observer, so exact, so unerring, a mind working so constantly upon the quick, should not be cruel, should show no sign of bitterness, should never become gloomy and depressed. It was because he loved men and naturally was indulgent to them."

After Daudet's death M. François Coppée wrote: "In the literature of this century Alphonse Daudet will stand in the first rank as a marvellous master of emotion, of grace and of irony. . . . Almost all of his books are masterpieces, and several of the characters created by his genius of observation, so profound and so acute, have attained the eminence of types. He has had the very great pleasure, the supreme reward of hearing people say, in his lifetime, 'a Delobelle' or 'a Tartarin,' as Molière heard people say 'a Célimène' or 'a Tartuffe.'

"France had no book which could be compared to *Don Quixote*. Alphonse Daudet has filled the gap with the three volumes of the life of Tartarin of Tarascon."

"His style," says the same eminent critic, "is inimitable, and no writer has succeeded as he has done in expressing vividly in words the sensation — the whole sensation — he feels in the very depths of his heart, at the very end of his nerves."

"Especially in his later works," says M. Lemaître, "his style is that of an extrordinarily 'sensitive' writer. It has the instant quiver of life that is expressed as soon as it is noted. Not a phrase of oratorical rhythm or of didactic finish. Never did any one make such persistent use of all 'grammatical figures,' abridgment, anacoluthon, ellipsis, ablative absolute. — Not a trick of style; constant invention of words. The impression toward the end was almost too strong, painful as it were. It was like the overflow of sensations which oppresses one in stormy weather. Turning over the leaves of those books, one would say that his fingers struck fire."

There is something irresistibly attractive to me in the mental picture which I draw of Alphonse Daudet, not only from what is said of him by those who were his nearest and dearest, but from the gentle tone which they who have written of his work seem to have adopted instinctively, and long before they can be suspected of doing violence to

their real opinions in deference to the maxim: *de mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

Years ago M. Jules Lemaître wrote: "The soul of that dear Little What's-His-Name, who had an unhappy childhood, and who dreams such sweet and fascinating dreams, continues to float lightly over M. Alphonse Daudet's genuine novels;" and *The Immortal* had been published when M. René Doumic referred to him as "this novelist, beloved of all men."

In 1895, M. François Coppée spoke of Daudet as "the writer whom I admire, and the friend whom I have dearly loved for many years." And again: "The Daudet whom I now invoke is my neighbor in the country for several summers past, the dear invalid of whom I think tenderly and sadly when I return from Champrosay to Mandres through the forest of Sénart, in the Shakespearian moonlight. Alas! how the poor fellow trembled just now, from walking a few steps in the garden! How heavily he leaned on my arm and on a cane! But I pause there, I am wrong. I was on the point of insulting his heroic courage, his proud resignation, the resignation of a giant of intellect."

This universally gentle, affectionate tone is the more impressive when compared with the tone in which these same men speak of certain other authors who are more constantly in the public eye than Daudet himself ever was. Have we far to seek for the reason? It seems to me that it is most justly set forth in these words, with which I bring

this rambling note to a close: "His works," says M. Georges Pellissier, "are the product of his heart no less than of his genius. There are writers whom we admire, and others whom we love; there are very few who succeed in winning love and admiration at once. Of these last is Alphonse Daudet. All the admirers whom he owes to his genius his heart has made his friends."

GEORGE B. IVES.

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A. DAUDET.

MEMORIES OF A MAN OF LETTERS.

ÉMILE OLLIVIER.

AMONG the Parisian salons which my first coat haunted, I retain a very pleasant memory of the salon Ortolan at the School of Law. Père Ortolan, a Southerner with a refined face and a jurist of renown, was also a poet in his leisure hours. He had published *Les Enfantines*, and although he vowed that he never wrote for any but the very young, he did not disdain any approbation that adults might bestow upon his verses. His evenings, sedulously attended by the natives of the studious quarters, presented an agreeable and original mixture of pretty women, professors and advocates, learned men and poets. It was as a poet that I was invited.

Among the celebrities, young and old, whom I saw there in the golden mist of the first bewildered sensations of youth, Émile Ollivier appeared one evening. He was with his first wife and the great musician Liszt, his father-in-law. Of her I remember a mass of fair hair above a velvet dress; of Liszt, the Liszt of that time,

even less. I had eyes and curiosity for Ollivier alone. He was then about thirty-three years old — it was in 1858 — and being very popular among the youth of the republican party, who were proud to have a leader of his years, he was treading the paths of glory. People whispered to one another the legend of his family; the old father long proscribed, the brother killed in a duel, himself proconsul at twenty years and governing Marseille by his eloquence. All this gave him, to the minds of those who saw him at a distance, a certain likeness to a Roman or Greek tribune, and even to the tragic young men of the great Revolution, the Saint-Justs, the Desmoulins, the Dantons. For my part, as I was but slightly interested in politics, seeing him thus, of poetic aspect despite his spectacles, eloquent, Lamartinian, always ready to talk and to work himself into a passion, I could not forbear comparing him to a tree of his province — not that whose name he bears, which is the symbol of wisdom — but one of those melodious pines which crown the white hills and are reflected in the blue waves of the Provençal coast, sterile it is true, but retaining a sort of echo of the antique lyre, and quivering always, their slender needles ever rustling at the lightest touch of the tempest, in the faintest breath that comes from Italy.

Émile Ollivier was at that time *One of the Five*[1] — one of the five deputies who dared, standing

[1] Two others of the Five were Jules Favre and Ernest Picard.

alone, to defy the Empire, and he sat among them, on the topmost benches of the Assembly, isolated in his opposition, as on an impregnable Aventine. Across the Chamber, Morny, lying back in his presidential chair, with a bored and sleepy expression, watched him with the cold eye of an unerring judge of men; he had decided that he was less Roman than Greek, swept onward by Athenian frivolity rather than ballasted by Latin prudence and cold reasoning. He knew the vulnerable spot; he knew that beneath that tribune's toga lay concealed the innate and defenceless vanity of virtuosi and poets, and he hoped by attacking him in that spot to bring him to terms sooner or later.

Years afterward, when I came in contact with Émile Ollivier for the second time and under the circumstances which I am about to narrate, he had been won over to the Empire. Morny, before his death, had displayed a sort of coquettish determination to overcome by sly advances and haughty cajoleries the resistance of that harmonious vanity, offered for form's sake and for the gallery. Men had shouted through the streets: "Émile Ollivier's great treason!" and therefore Émile Ollivier believed himself a second Comte de Mirabeau. Mirabeau had tried to make the Revolution and the Monarchy march in step; Ollivier, impelled by the best intentions, tried after twenty years to unite Liberty to the Empire, and his efforts recalled Phrosine attempting to marry the Adriatic to the Great Turk. Mean-

while the Great Turk, as he had long been a widower, had made a match for himself with a very young girl, a Provençale like himself, who admired him. He was said to be radiant, triumphant; the same honeymoon silvered with its softest rays his amours and his politics. A happy man!

But a pistol-shot rang out in the direction of Auteuil. Pierre Bonaparte[1] had shot Victor Noir; and that Corsican bullet through a young man's heart dealt a deadly blow at the fiction of the liberal Empire. Paris suddenly rose, the cafés talked in loud tones, a mob gesticulated wildly on the sidewalks. From moment to moment fresh news arrived, reports of all sorts were circulated; people told of Prince Pierre's strange abode, that Auteuil mansion tightly closed amid the bustle and uproar of Paris, like the tower of a Genoese or Florentine nobleman, smelling of powder and old iron, and echoing the livelong day with pistol-shots and the clash of crossed swords. Others told what manner of man Victor Noir was, his exceeding gentleness of disposition, his youth, his approaching marriage. And lo! the women took a hand: they pitied the mother, the fiancée; the touching element of a love-romance inflamed political passions. The *Marseillaise*, between heavy leads, published its call to arms; people said that Rochefort would distribute four thousand revolvers at his office that

[1] Pierre was the son of Lucien, second brother of Napoléon I. He was born at Rome in 1815, and died at Versailles in 1881.

evening. Two hundred thousand men, women and children, the bourgeois quarters, all the faubourgs prepared for the great manifestation of the following day; the rumor of barricades was in the air, and in the melancholy of the fading daylight one could hear those vague sounds, precursors of revolution, which seem like the dull cracking of the timbers of a throne.

At that juncture I met a friend on the boulevard. "This looks bad," I said to him. — "Very bad indeed, and the most disgusting part of it is that *on high* they have no suspicion of the gravity of the affair." Passing his arm through mine, he added: "Émile Ollivier knows you; come to Place Vendôme with me."

Since Émile Ollivier had become Minister of Justice, that department of the government had lost all appearance of administrative ostentation and arrogance. Being entirely sincere in his dreams of a democratic and liberal Empire, a genuine American minister, Ollivier declined to occupy those vast apartments, those lofty salons, decorated with the imperial bees and with a profusion of crests and gilding which, in his view, were too suggestive of autocracy. He continued to occupy the same modest lodgings on Rue Saint-Guillaume which he had occupied as a simple advocate and deputy, and arrived at Place Vendôme every morning with a huge satchel stuffed with papers under his arm, with his frock-coat and spectacles, like a lawyer on his way to the Palais de Justice, like a worthy government clerk

walking to his office. This conduct caused him to be more or less despised by the attendants and ushers. Door wide open, staircase deserted! Doorkeepers and ushers allowed us to pass, not deigning even to ask us where we were going or whom we sought, simply testifying, by an air of contemptuous resignation and a certain correct insolence of bearing, how contrary to the dignified, vanished traditions of the administrative ideal they considered these novel and undignified methods.

In a large, high office, lighted by enormous door-windows, one of those offices of cold and depressing aspect where everything is green, but of the bureaucratic green of green boxes and chairs covered with green leather, which is to the lovely verdure of the woods and fields what a stamped paper is to a sonnet written on vellum, what cider is to champagne, — the minister was alone, standing with his back to the fireplace, at his post, in an oratorical attitude. Night was falling. Attendants brought in two tall lamps already lighted.

My friend had said truly that nothing was suspected *on high;* the rumors of the street reached those lofty heights only as a vague murmur. Émile Ollivier, with the natural infatuation, intensified by a certain short-sighted way of looking at things, which is characteristic of the man in power, assured us that everything was going as well as possible, that he was thoroughly informed as to the state of affairs; he even showed us the

note written by Pierre Bonaparte to M. Conti, which had been officially communicated to him; a savage, feudal sort of note, in the traditional Italian style of the sixteenth century, beginning thus: "Two young men insulted me—" and ending with these words: "I think that I killed one of them."

Thereupon I took the floor and told what I believed to be the truth, not as a politician but as a man, describing the effervescent condition of the popular mind, the exasperation of the street, the unavoidable alternative of an appeal to arms or a courageous act of justice. I added that it seemed to me, as to everybody else, absolutely certain that Fonvielle and Noir were incapable of a purpose to kill or to strike the prince at his house; that I knew them both, Noir especially; and I told how my heart had warmed toward that tall, inoffensive youth, still hardly more than a child, who was amazed by his success in Paris, proud of his precocious renown, striving by dint of hard work to acquire what he lacked in the matter of elementary education; and whose greatest joy was to have a friend teach him some brief Latin quotation, together with suggestions as to the method of introducing it adroitly, apropos of anything, in conversation, with the idea of displaying his erudition that evening, and thereby dumfounding J. J. Weiss, then connected with the *Journal de Paris*, who was teaching him orthography.

Émile Ollivier listened to me with close atten-

tion, with a pensive, determined air; and when I had finished, after a brief silence he uttered in a haughty voice this sentence, which I quote in his very words:

"Very well! if Prince Pierre is an assassin, we will send him to the galleys!"

A Bonaparte, to the galleys! Those were the empty words of a keeper of the Seals of the liberal Empire, of a minister still mired in his illusions as an orator, of a minister who bore the title of minister without the ministerial spirit, of a minister, in a word, who lived on Rue Saint-Guillaume!

The next day, it is true, Pierre Bonaparte was a prisoner, but a prisoner as princes usually are prisoners, on the first floor of the Tour d'Argent, with an outlook on Place du Châtelet and the Seine; and the good people of Paris, as they crossed the bridge, pointed to his burlesque dungeon and the white curtains at his windows, which were hardly barred. A few weeks later Prince Pierre was solemnly acquitted by the High Court at Bourges. Émile Ollivier said no more about the galleys; but he left Rue Saint-Guillaume to take up his quarters on Place Vendôme. Thereafter, doorkeepers and ushers in the vast corridors and the broad stairways smiled ceremoniously when he passed; he had become an unexceptionable minister, and the liberal Empire had lived!

To sum up, Émile Ollivier may be described as a statesman of moderate parts, prone to act

upon impulse and unreflecting, but an honest man, an idealistic poet gone astray in public affairs. Morny first of all, and others after Morny, made a tool of him. A republican, he tried to strengthen the dynasty by roughcasting it with liberty; later, he wished for peace, declared war, and not with a light heart, as he said by an unfortunate inspiration, but with a mind irremediably light and frivolous, he dragged us with him into the abyss whence we found our way out, but in which he remained!

The other evening — people always meet sooner or later in Paris — we dined opposite each other at a friend's table; the same as in the old days, the same dreamy glance, questioning and hesitating behind his spectacles, the same characteristic talker's face, in which one's attention is engrossed by the fold of the lips, by the shape of the mouth, instinct with audacity but devoid of will. Proud and erect withal, but all white; white as to his thick hair, white as to his short whiskers, white as a camp abandoned after a disastrous campaign, and covered with snow. And with all the rest, the jarring, nervous voice of those who have more upon their heart than they care to display.

And I remembered the young tribune, black as a crow, of whom I once caught a glimpse in Père Ortolan's salon.[1]

[1] Émile Ollivier was born at Marseille in 1825. He was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-one, and two years later, after the Revolution of 1848, was made *commissaire* of the Re-

public in the departments of Bouches-du-Rhône and Var. His administration was not successful and he was soon removed from that post to that of prefect of Haute-Marne, — an exchange which was so evidently a degradation that he was with difficulty dissuaded by his friends from resigning. Louis Napoléon eventually dismissed him and he returned to private life and the practice of his professio

In 1857 he was chosen one of the deputies for Paris. It was in 1863 that the *Five* referred to above made themselves famous, but Ollivier's apostasy was not long delayed, as he broke with the opposition in 1864, only a year before Morny's death. He seems to have invited the advances that were made to him.

In December, 1869, he became Prime Minister, being invited by the Emperor to "name persons who will, associated with yourself, form a homogeneous cabinet, faithfully representing the legislative majority." The new cabinet took office January 2, 1870, and Ollivier became Minister of Justice, his colleagues being selected from the leaders of the Left Centre and Right Centre. Great hopes were founded upon this coalition as the beginning of a constitutional régime, but they were of brief duration. The more liberal members of the cabinet resigned about May 1, but the policy of Napoléon and Ollivier was approved by a majority of the popular vote on May 8. After this policy had plunged the nation into the war with Prussia (formally declared July 19), Ollivier, on August 9, resigned his office, and by that step irretrievably lost all his influence and all his hold upon the public confidence. He has almost passed out of sight since that period, appearing only on rare occasions and generally in connection with his membership in the French Academy.

GAMBETTA.

ONE day, years and years ago, at my table d'hôte on Rue du Sénat, which I have already shown you — a tiny room at the rear of a narrow courtyard with a cold, cleanly swept pavement, where rose-laurels and spindle-trees withered in their classic green boxes — before a sumptuous banquet at two francs a plate, Gambetta and Rochefort met. I had brought Rochefort. It sometimes happened that I invited a brother of the craft to dinner thus, on the morrow of an article in *Figaro*, when fortune smiled upon me; it enlivened and gave variety to a somewhat provincial circle. Unfortunately Rochefort and Gambetta were not made to agree, and I believe that they did not speak to each other that evening. I can see them now, each at one end of the table, separated by the whole length of the cloth, and both the same in appearance as they always remained: Rochefort reserved, self-contained, with a dry, silent laugh; the other laughing uproariously, shouting, gesticulating, overflowing and steaming like a vat of Cahors wine. And how many things, how many momentous events were foreshadowed, unsuspected by any of us, in

the holding aloof of those two guests, amid the stoneware jugs and the napkin-rings of a meagre students' dinner!

The Gambetta of those days was throwing off his humors and deafening the cafés in the Latin Quarter with his thunderous eloquence. But mark this: the cafés in the quarter at that period were not simply taprooms where men gathered to drink and smoke. Amid the muzzled Paris of that time, deprived of public life and of newspapers, these meetings of studious young men of generous impulses, veritable schools of opposition, or rather of legitimate resistance, continued to be the only places where a free voice could still be raised. Each of them had its orator *par excellence*, a table which, at certain moments, became almost a tribune, and each orator in the quarter his admirers and partisans.

"At the Voltaire there's Larmina, a strong man — *bigre!* what a powerful speaker that Larmina at the Voltaire is!"

"I don't say he is n't, but at the Procope there 's Pesquidoux, who is more powerful than he."

And they would go in troops, by way of pilgrimage, to the Voltaire to hear Larmina, then to the Procope to hear Pesquidoux, with the ingenuous, fervent faith of the youth of twenty of those days. In very truth these discussions over a glass of bock, amid the pipe smoke, were educating a generation and keeping constantly awake that France which was thought to be chloroformed for good and all. More than one

doctrinaire,[1] who, being comfortably settled today or hoping to be, affects the contempt of offended good taste for such customs and unreflectingly considers the new generation of students as on a level with those of the old days, has lived for a long while and still lives — I know some of them — on snatches of eloquence or lofty argument which richly-endowed spendthrifts left lying on the tables at the time of which I write. Of course some of our young tribunes delayed too long, grew old around the tables, talked constantly and never did anything. Every army corps has its stragglers whom the head of the column leaves behind at last; but Gambetta was not one of them. If he skirmished at the café by gaslight, it was always after a day filled with genuine hard labor. As the factory blows off its steam into the gutter at night, he went thither to expend in words his overflow of energy and ideas. That did not interfere with his being a serious student, with his winning triumphs at the conference Molé, being entered on the advocates' roll, earning diplomas and certificates. One evening at Madame Ancelot's — great heaven! how long ago that was! — in that salon on Rue Guillaume, full of bright old men and birds in cages, I remember that I heard the very good-natured mistress of the house say to some one: "My son-in-law Lachaud has a new secretary, a very eloquent young man, it seems, with a deuce of a name — wait a moment — his

[1] Written in 1878, for the *Novoë-Vremya* of St. Petersburg.

name is — his name is Monsieur Gambetta." Assuredly the excellent old lady was very far from foreseeing how high that young secretary would rise, who was said to be eloquent, and who had such a deuce of a name. And yet, aside from the inevitable toning down, of which experience of life undertakes to demonstrate the necessity to men of much less subtle comprehension than his, aside from a certain political insight into the motives and hidden purposes of men, readily acquired in the exercise of power and management of affairs, the young law-student of the time of which I write was, so far as his general character and appearance were concerned, substantially the same man that we afterward knew. Not stout as yet, but squarely built, round-shouldered, familiar in gesture, already fond of leaning on a friend's arm as he walked and chatted; he was a voluble talker, on all subjects, with the harsh, penetrating Southern voice, which cuts out sentences as with the coiner's stamp, and strikes words like medals; but he listened, too, asked questions, read, assimilated everything, and prepared that enormous stock of facts and ideas which is so indispensable to him who assumes to guide an epoch and a country so complicated as ours. Gambetta is one of the few politicians who possess objects of art, and who suspect that letters fill some place in the life of a nation. This preoccupation appears constantly in his conversation and even crops out in his speeches, but entirely without arrogance or ped-

antry, rather as coming from one who has seen artists near at hand, and to whom literary and artistic matters are of daily and familiar interest. In the days of the Hôtel du Sénat, the young advocate, whose friend I was, would sometimes hurry through a lecture to go to the Museums and admire the great masters, or, at the opening of the Salon, to defend the great painter François Millet, then unappreciated, against the drowsy and those who came late. His initiator and guide in the seven circles of the hell of painting was a Southerner like himself, somewhat older than he, a hairy, unsociable creature, with terrible eyes, which one could see gleaming beneath enormous drooping lashes, like a brigand's fire in the depths of a cavern masked by underbrush. It was Théophile Silvestre, a superb and tireless talker, with a mountaineer's voice ringing like the iron of Ariège, a writer of refined taste, an incomparable art critic, doting upon painters and estimating their value with the comprehensive subtlety of a lover and a poet. He loved the unknown Gambetta, foreseeing the great rôle he was to play; he continued to love him at a later period, notwithstanding a bitter political disagreement, and died one day at his table, of joy one might say, and in the ecstasy of a tardy reconciliation.[1]

These saunterings through the Salon, through the Louvre, on Théophile Silvestre's arm, had

[1] Théophile Silvestre, littérateur and journalist, born at Foasat (Ariège) in 1823, died in 1876.

given Gambetta a sort of reputation for indolence with certain embryotic statesmen who had been girthed and cravatted from childhood. They are the same men, now taller and older, who, being still full of themselves and still hermetically corked, speak of him in private as a frivolous man and as a politician without serious purpose, because, forsooth, he enjoys the company of a bright fellow who happens to be an actor. This would prove, at the utmost, that then as to-day Gambetta was a judge of men and knew the great secret of making it possible to make use of them, which is to win their affection. One characteristic stroke to finish the picture of the Gambetta of that day: that voice like a speaking trumpet, that terrible talker, that mighty *gasconizer*, was not a Gascon. Is it the influence of race? In more than one respect that impetuous son of Cahors was a near neighbor of the Italian frontier and Italian prudence; the strain of Genoese blood made of him almost a discreet Provençal. Talking often, talking all the time, he never allowed himself to be carried away by the eddying current of his words; he was very enthusiastic, but he knew beforehand the exact point at which his enthusiasm should halt, and, to express my whole meaning in a few words, he is almost the only great talker, so far as my knowledge goes, who is not at the same time an utterly unreliable maker of promises.

One morning, as always happened sooner or later, that noisy brood of youngsters who had

their nests in Hôtel du Sénat, took their flight, having become conscious of the growth of their wings. One flew northward, another toward the south. Gambetta and I lost sight of each other. I did not forget him however; as I dug and delved on my own account, living entirely apart from the world of politics, I sometimes wondered: "What has become of my friend from Cahors?" and I should have been astonished to learn that he was not in a fair way to become *somebody*. A few years later, happening to be at the Senate — not the hotel, but the palace of the Senate — on one of the reception evenings, I had taken refuge, far from the music and the noise, on a corner of the bench in a billiard-room, formerly a part of the vast suite, high enough for six ordinary floors, of Queen Marie de Medicis. It was the critical period, the period of attempts on the part of the Empire to endear itself to the people, when it was making loving advances to the various parties, talking of mutual concessions, and under color of reforms and soft words trying to entice, at the same time with the least radical of the Republicans, the last survivors of the old liberal bourgeoisie. Odillon Barrot, I remember, the famous Odillon Barrot, was playing billiards.[1] A whole gallery of old or prema-

[1] Odillon Barrot, a very famous advocate and politician, figured in almost all the great causes in France for nearly half a century, and was equally prominent in politics, taking a leading part in the Revolutions of July, 1830, and of 1848. He was celebrated as a wit and maker of *bons mots*. In 1869 he declined an offer of a position in the ministry. He was President of the

turely solemn men surrounded him, less heedful, most assuredly, of his strokes than of his person. They were waiting for a phrase, a *bon mot* to fall from those once eloquent lips, that they might pick it up and put it away under glass, piously, devoutly, as the angel did with Eloa's tear. But Odillon Barrot persisted in saying nothing, he chalked his cue, he made his stroke, nobly and with a grace of movement in which a whole past of bourgeois solemnity and high-cravatted parliamentarianism seemed to live again. Hardly a word was spoken in his neighborhood; those conscript fathers of an earlier age, those Epimenides who had been asleep since Louis-Philippe and 1848, conversed only in very low tones, as if they were not sure that they were really awake. I succeeded in catching these words on the wing: "Great scandal — Baudin trial — scandal — Baudin." As I seldom read the newspapers, and did not leave home until very late in the day, I knew absolutely nothing about that famous trial.[1] Sud-

Council of State in 1872. Died August 6, 1873. Barrot appeared at his best in defence of the Protestants who refused to decorate their house fronts for the procession of Corpus Christi. In the first case he ever tried he made a very famous retort to Lamennais, a Catholic, who said: "So you claim that the law is atheist?" "Yes," replied Barrot, "yes, it is, and it should be, if you mean by that that the law, which exists only to constrain, has no concern with the religious beliefs of mankind, which are outside of all constraint; it should be, in the sense that it protects all religions and identifies itself with none."

[1] Jean B. A. V. Baudin, born in 1811, a doctor and politician. He was a Republican of 1848, of the most rabid description; and when Louis Napoléon perpetrated the *coup d'état* (December 2, 1851) which made him Emperor and brought disaster upon

denly I heard Gambetta's name: — "Who in God's name is this Monsieur Gambetta?" said one of the old men, with deliberate or natural impertinence. All the memories of my life in the quarter came rushing into my mind. I was sitting quietly in my corner, with the perfect independence of an honest man of letters who earned his own living and was too free from all obligations and all political ambition to be overawed by such an areopagus, however venerable it might be. I rose: "This Monsieur Gambetta?

France, Baudin, then a deputy, resolved, with the concurrence of a few of his colleagues, to sustain the cause of the Republic and liberty, or die for it. They attempted to resist and threw up barricades in the streets of Paris; but they were practically defenceless and were shot down by the troops sent against them after having tried in vain to win the troops over to their side. — Seventeen years later, in 1868, a book was published called "Paris in December, 1851," in which the *coup d'état* was discussed at length and great prominence given to Baudin. The book created great excitement and crowds of people visited Baudin's grave. A public subscription for a monument was started, and lists of the subscribers were published. In November certain journalists and others were summoned before one of the lower criminal courts, charged with plotting to disturb the public peace or to incite the people to hatred and contempt of the imperial government. Gambetta and Jules Favre were among counsel retained for the defence. Gambetta considered the question at issue to be this: "Is there a moment when, on the pretext that the public safety demands such a step, the law may be overthrown and those persons treated as criminals who defend it at the peril of their lives?" As he elaborated his argument he grew more and more excited and refused to be silenced; his speech was an extremely brilliant and intensely bitter attack on the Empire. There seems to be no doubt that the widespread excitement and discussion caused by the Baudin subscription did much to weaken the government of Louis Napoléon.

Why, he is unquestionably a very remarkable man. I knew him when he was very young, and every one of us predicted a most magnificent future for him." — If you could have seen the general stupefaction at that outbreak, the games interrupted, the billiard cues poised in the air, all those irritated worthies, and the very balls gazing at me under the lamp with their round eyes! Where did this fellow come from, this stranger, who presumed to stand up for another, and in M. Odillon Barrot's presence too! — An intelligent man — we meet them everywhere — M. Oscar de Vallée, saved me. He was an advocate, procureur-général, I don't know what — one of the elect at all events, and the very fact that he had left his cap in the dressing-room conferred upon him the right to speak in any presence; he spoke: — "Monsieur is right, perfectly right, Maître Gambetta is no upstart; all of us at the Palais have the greatest admiration for him because of his eloquence;" and, noticing probably that the word eloquence did not arouse the enthusiasm of the company, he added, insistently: "because of his eloquence and his *jugeotte*." [1]

Then came the supreme assault upon the Empire, whole months charged with powder, stuffed with threats, all Paris shuddering beneath an indefinable warning breath, like the forest before the storm; ah! we of the generation which complained of having seen nothing were to see storms indeed. Gambetta, as the result of his argument

[1] *Jugeotte* is pure *argot*: "intellect."

in the Baudin trial, was in a fair way to become a great man; the fathers of the republican party, the combatants of 1851, the exiles, the *old beards*, had a fatherly affection for the young tribune, the faubourgs expected everything from the "one-eyed lawyer," the young men swore by him alone. I met him sometimes: "he was going to be chosen deputy, — he had just returned to Paris after a great speech at Lyon or Marseille!" — Always excited, always scenting powder, always in the agitated frame of mind of the day following a battle, talking aloud, squeezing one's hand hard and throwing his hair back with a gesture instinct with decision and energy. A delightful companion withal, more than ever familiar in his manner, and always glad to stop in the street to laugh and chat. "Breakfast at Meudon?" he said in answer to one of his friends who invited him. "Gladly! but by-and-by, when we have made an end of the Empire."

And now the great overturn is upon us, the war, the Fourth of September,[1] Gambetta a member of

[1] On September 1, 1870, the battle of Sedan was fought, resulting in the disastrous defeat of MacMahon, who had been sent to the relief of Bazaine, then shut up in Metz. The Emperor surrendered his sword to the King of Prussia. The news reached Paris three days later, on September 4, and caused intense excitement. Gambetta rose in the Corps Législatif, declared the Emperor deposed, and France a republic. A provisional government of National Defence was formed at the Hôtel de Ville, General Trochu being elected President, Jules Favre Vice-President and Jules Ferry Secretary; Gambetta, Rochefort and Jules Simon were among the other members. They immediately determined to abolish the Senate and the Corps Législatif. At

the National Defence, a colleague of Rochefort therein. They met again face to face around the green cloth where proclamations and decrees were signed, as they had met twelve years before around the glazed cloth of my table d'hôte. The sudden accession to power of my two former comrades in the Latin Quarter did not surprise me. The air was full at that moment of much more astounding prodigies. The great crash of the Empire as it fell still filled our ears, prevented our hearing the boots of the Prussian army which was coming nearer and nearer. I remember one of my first walks through the streets. I was returning from the country — a peaceful nook in the forest of Sénart — still breathing the fresh air of the foliage and the river. I felt like one dazed; it was no longer Paris, but an immense fair, something like an enormous barracks, making holiday. Everybody wore a military cap, and the petty industries, suddenly set free by the disappearance of the police, filled the whole city with multicolored booths and cries, as in the days immediately preceding New Year's Day. The streets swarmed with people, night was falling, fragments of the *Marseillaise* were in the air. Suddenly, right in my ear, a bantering, drawling faubourg voice cried: "Buy the Bonaparte woman, her orgies, her lovers — two sous!" and the owner of the voice held out a sheet of paper, a canard still damp from the press. What

one o'clock in the afternoon of that day the Empress left the Tuileries and fled to England.

a dream! In the heart of Paris, within two steps of that palace of the Tuileries where the echoes of the last fêtes were still floating; on those same boulevards which I had seen, only a few months before, swept with clubs, sidewalk and roadway, by squads of police! The antithesis produced a profound impression upon me, and I had for five minutes a very clear and sharply-defined consciousness of that ghastly and grandiose thing which is called a revolution.

I saw Gambetta once, during this first period of the siege, at the Department of the Interior — where he had taken up his quarters as if in his own home, unconcernedly, like a man to whom something had happened which he had long anticipated — receiving tranquilly, *à la papa*, with his slightly satirical good-humor, those chiefs of bureaux who only yesterday had referred to him contemptuously as "little Gambetta!" and now bent their backs and murmured, with an air of deep concern: "If Monsieur le Ministre will deign to permit me!"

I saw Gambetta afterward only at long intervals, and as it were through some rent suddenly made in the dark, cold and sinister cloud which hovered over the Paris of the siege. One of these meetings left an ineradicable impression on my mind. It was at Montmartre, on Place Saint-Pierre, at the foot of that escarpment of mortar and ochre which the construction of the church of the Sacré-Cœur has covered since with loose rubbish, but where at that time, not-

withstanding the trampling of numerous idling Dominicans and the sliding of urchins, a few patches of sickly turf, broken and ragged, were still green. Below us, in the haze, the city with its myriad roofs and its mighty hum, which subsided from time to time to let us hear the dull roar of the cannon of the forts in the distance. There was a small tent on the square, and in the centre of a circle enclosed by a rope, a huge yellow balloon pulling on its cable and swaying back and forth. Gambetta, it was said, was about to leave Paris, to electrify the provinces, to arouse them to the point of rushing to the deliverance of the capital, to inflame men's minds, to restore courage, in a word — and perhaps he would have succeeded but for Bazaine's treachery — to repeat the miracles of 1792! At first I saw nobody but Nadar, friend Nadar, with his aeronaut's cap, which had played a part in all the events of the siege; then, standing in the centre of a group, I spied Spuller[1] and Gambetta, both muffled in furs.

[1] Spuller, between 1860 and 1870, was interested in a journal called *L'Europe*, published at Frankfort, and on the eve of the war between Prussia and Austria, in 1866, he constantly dwelt upon the menace to France and to Europe inherent in the insatiable ambition of the Prussian monarchy. He subsequently came to Paris, and was the author of the famous document circulated during the elections of 1869, with the signatures of fifteen hundred electors, wherein Émile Ollivier was declared unworthy of confidence. On September 4, 1870, he followed Gambetta to power, without any official title, and became his collaborator, something more than his secretary, his *alter ego* and inseparable companion in the struggle. He had a share in all his Chief's great work and seconded him with great ability and

Spuller was very calm, brave without affectation, but unable to remove his eyes from that enormous machine in which he was to take his place in the capacity of *chef de cabinet*, and murmuring in a dreamy voice: "Really, it 's a most extraordinary thing!" Gambetta, as always, talking and raising his shoulders, almost delighted with the adventure. He came up to me and shook hands: a grasp which said many things. Then Spuller and he entered the basket. "Let go all!" Nadar's voice rang out. A few shouts of farewell, a "Vive la République!" the balloon shot up into the air, and it was all over.

Gambetta's balloon arrived safe and sound, but how many others fell into the sea at night, pierced by Prussian bullets, to say nothing of the incredible adventure of that one which, after driving twenty hours before a gale, landed in Norway within a few steps of the fiords and the frozen ocean! Surely, whatever any one may say, there was heroism in those expeditions, and I cannot recall without emotion that last grasp of the hand and that wicker-basket, which, smaller and more fragile than Cæsar's historic vessel, bore all the hope of Paris away into the wintry sky.

I did not see Gambetta again until a year later, at the trial of Bazaine, in that summer dining-room at Marie Antoinette's Trianon, of which

indefatigable devotion. It was on October 8, 1870, that they escaped from Paris in the balloon, and subsequently joined Crémieux and others at Tours.

ner; but I could not congratulate him, for this reason. When the siege of Paris was first raised and I was still shaking with the siege fever, I had written an article on Gambetta and the national defence in the provinces, — a sincere but very unjust article which, as soon as I was more fully informed, I took great pleasure in expunging from my books. Every Parisian was more or less mad just then, myself like the rest. We had been lied to and tricked so many times. We had read on the walls of mayors' offices so many placards radiant with hope, so many encouraging proclamations, followed the next day by such lamentable collapses; we had been made to make so many absurd marches, musket on shoulder and knapsack on back; we had so often been forced to lie on our stomachs in the ensanguined mud, motionless, useless, foolish, while the shells rained down on our backs! And the spies, and the despatches! "Let us occupy the heights of Montretout, the enemy is falling back!" or: "In day before yesterday's engagement we took two helmets and the barrel of a musket." — And this, while four hundred thousand National Guards were stamping their feet in Paris, asking only to be allowed to go out and fight! Then, when the gates were open, it was a different story; and while people were saying in the provinces: "Paris did n't fight!" they were whispering in Paris: "You were abandoned in a most dastardly way by the provinces." — So that, frantic, covered with shame, powerless to distinguish any-

thing clearly in that fog of hatred and falsehood, suspecting treason, cowardice and imbecility everywhere, we had ended by putting everything, Paris and the provinces, into the same bag. Afterward, when the air cleared, the misunderstanding vanished. The provinces learned of the fruitless heroism displayed by Paris during those five months; and I, a Parisian of the siege, realized for my humble part how worthy of admiration were Gambetta's acts in the provinces and that great National Defence movement in which we had seen at first only Tarasconian bluster and brag.

I met Gambetta once more two years ago. We had had no explanation; he came to me with outstretched hand; it was at Ville-d'Avray, at the country house of Alphonse Lemerre the publisher, where Corot lived so long. A charming house, built for a painter or a poet; a typical eighteenth century structure, with its well-preserved wainscotings, panels over the doors, and a small porch leading down to the garden. We breakfasted in the garden, in the open air, among the flowers and the birds, under the great Virgilian trees which the old master loved to paint, their foliage was of such a soft and lovely green in the cool neighborhood of the ponds. We sat there through the afternoon, recalling the past and exchanging confidences as to our position in Paris — Gambetta, the doctor, and myself, the last three survivors of our table d'hôte. Then came the turn of art and literature. Gambetta, I was

overjoyed to find, read everything, saw everything, was still an expert connoisseur and keen in his literary judgments. Those were five delightful hours that we passed in that green and flowery retreat, between Paris and Versailles, and yet so far removed from all political uproar. Gambetta, it seems, realized its charm; a week after that breakfast under the trees, he purchased a country house at Ville d'Avray.[1]

[1] Léon Gambetta was born at Cahors, April 3, 1838; he was of Jewish extraction. He was admitted to the Paris bar in 1859; devoted himself to politics as well as to his profession, and was already a man of note when he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1869. He acted with the so-called *Irréconciliables* there.

After the proclamation of the republic and formation of the provisional government (September 4, 1870), he became (September 5) Minister of the Interior. As we have seen, he escaped from Paris by balloon in October, having been appointed one of a committee to organize a national defence outside of the capital. He joined his colleagues at Tours and assumed a virtual dictatorship, negotiating a loan with English capitalists, and organizing two armies of the Loire and an army of the North. He was unable, however, to prevent the capitulation of Paris (January 28, 1871), and on February 6 he resigned his office on account of a disagreement with the central government. In the same year he was re-elected to the Chamber of Deputies. He was president of that body from 1879 to 1881, and Prime Minister from November 1881 to January 1, 1882.

He died at Sèvres, December 31, 1882.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — NUMA ROUMESTAN.

WHEN I began this history of my books, wherein some persons may have detected the self-conceit of an author, but which seemed to me the true method, original and distinctive, of writing the memoirs of a man of letters on the margin of his books, I took great pleasure in it, I confess. To-day, my pleasure has sensibly diminished. In the first place the idea has lost its savor, having been adopted by several of my confrères and not the least illustrious of them; and then the constantly increasing vogue of reporting, great and small, the uproar and dust which it raises about the play or the book, in the shape of anecdotal details which a writer who is neither unapproachable in his grandeur nor of a surly temper willingly allows to be extorted from him. So that my auto-historic task has become more difficult; my fine shoes, which I kept in reserve, to be worn only on great occasions, have been trodden down at the heel.

It is very certain, for instance, that what the newspapers said a few months ago apropos of the comedy founded on *Numa Roumestan*, and played at the Odéon, their research and their praises

have left almost nothing of interest for me to say about my book, and have exposed me to the danger of tedious repetition. At all events it has helped me to shatter once and for all the legend, propagated by people who did not themselves believe it, that Gambetta was concealed under Roumestan. As if it were possible! as if, had I attempted to make a Gambetta, anybody could have mistaken the picture, even under the mask of Numa!

The fact is that for years and years, in a little green note-book which I have before me now, full of closely written notes and inexplicable erasures, under the general title of THE SOUTH, I have noted the distinguishing characteristics of my native province, its climate, morals, temperament, accent, the gestures, fits of frenzy and passionate outbursts of our sunlight, and that artless need of lying which is due to an excess of imagination, to an expansive, chattering, good-natured madness, so utterly unlike the cold-blooded, wicked, deliberate lying which we find in the North. I have gathered these notes everywhere, — first of all from myself, whom I always use as a unit of measure, and among my own people and in the memories of my infancy, retained by an extraordinary memory, wherein every sensation is jotted down and stereotyped as soon as it is felt.

Everything is noted in the little green book, from the local ballads, the proverbs and homely sayings in which the instincts of a people stand

confessed, to the cries of the hawkers of fresh water, of the candy and fruit peddlers of our travelling fairs; to the groans extorted by our diseases, which the imagination magnifies and increases by repercussion, — they are almost all nervous diseases, of a rheumatic nature, caused by the constant wind and scorching heat, which consume the marrow of your bones, reduce everything to a state of fusion, like sugar-cane; the crimes of the South, too, are noted in that book, explosions of passion, of drunken violence, drunken without drinking, which confuse and terrify the consciences of the judges who come from a different climate and are completely astray amid these exaggerations, this extravagant testimony which they do not know how to gauge. From that book I drew *Tartarin de Tarascon*, *Numa Roumestan*, and, more recently, *Tartarin on the Alps*. Other books dealing with the South are vaguely outlined there, fanciful sketches, novels, physiological studies: Mirabeau, Marquis de Sade, Raousset-Boulbon, and the *Malade Imaginaire*, whom Molière surely imported from the South. Yes, and even serious history too, if I may believe this ambitious line in a corner of the little book: "*Napoléon, a Southerner — the whole race embodied in him.*"

Mon Dieu, yes. In anticipation of the day when the Novel of Manners should weary me by the confined and conventional limits of its frame, when I should feel the need of enlarging my field and of soaring higher, I had dreamed of that — of

striking the dominant note in Napoléon's supernatural existence, of interpreting that extraordinary man by this simple phrase, The South, of which Taine, with all his learning, never thought. The South, pompous, classical, theatrical, fond of parade and gorgeous costumes, — with a spot or two in the creases — platforms, plumes, banners and trumpets flaring in the wind. The family-loving, tradition-ridden South, inheriting from the Orient loyalty to the clan or the tribe, with the fondness for sweet dishes and that incurable contempt for woman which does not prevent its being passionate and lustful to the point of madness. The cajoling, cunning South, with its reckless eloquence, luminous but colorless — for color is a Northern quality — with its short but terrible outbreaks of wrath, accompanied by much pawing of the ground and grimacing, always more or less simulated, even when they are sincere — now tragic, now comic — typical Mediterranean hurricanes, ten feet of foam on top of calm water. The superstitious, idol-worshipping South, readily forgetful of the gods in the excitement of its salamander-like life, but remembering the prayers of its childhood as soon as disease or misfortune threatens. (Napoléon on his knees praying, at sunset, on the deck of the *Northumberland*, and hearing mass twice a week in the dining-room at St. Helena.) — Lastly, and above all, the most prominent characteristic of the race, imagination, which was never so vast, so frenzied in any man as in him. (Egypt, Russia, the dream of con-

quering the Indies.) Such was the Napoléon whom I would have liked to describe in the principal acts of his public life and the trivial details of his private life, coupling with him for a foil, for a Bompard, imitating and exaggerating his gestures and his display, another Southerner, Murat, of Cahors, the poor and intrepid Murat, who was captured and driven to the wall, having attempted to effect a little return from Elba on his own account.

But let us leave the historical work which I have never written, which I may never have the time to write, for this novel, *Numa Roumestan*, already several years old, in which so many of my countrymen have pretended to recognize themselves, although every character in the story is made up of scraps and fragments. A single one, and, as one would naturally suspect, the most ridiculous and improbable of them all, was taken from life, copied strictly from nature — the chimerical and delirious Bompard, a silent, self-contained Southerner, who proceeds only by explosions and whose conceits surpass all measure, because the visions of that slave of his imagination lack the prolixity in speech or writing which is our safety-valve. This Bompard type is frequently met with among us, but I never made a careful study of any specimen save this one of mine, a good-natured, mild-mannered fellow whom I meet sometimes on the boulevard, and who was not in the slightest degree offended by the publication of Numa, because, with so

great a multitude of novels fermenting in his brain, he has no leisure to read those that other people write.

In the case of the *tambourinaire,* Valmajour, some details are taken from life, for instance, the little tale: "*It came to me at night,*" etc. — which I plucked, word by word, from his artless lips. I have described elsewhere[1] the burlesque and pitiable epic of this Draguignanais, whom my dear and great Mistral despatched to me one day with these lines: "I send you Buisson, *tambourinaire;* pilot him," and the endless series of failures which Buisson and I made, in the wake of his rustic flute, in Parisian salons, theatres and concert halls. But the real truth, which I could not tell in his lifetime for fear of injuring him, I may divulge to-day, when death has burst his drum, *pécaïré!* and stuffed with black earth the three holes in his flute. It is this: Buisson was a sham *tambourinaire,* a petty bourgeois from the South, who played a clarinet or cornet in some town band and had learned how to handle the *galoubet* and the *massette* of the old Provençal peasant merry-makings, simply as a diversion. When he arrived in Paris, the poor devil did not know a single Provençal tune, not a serenade or a *farandole.* His repertory consisted of the overture to the *Bronze Horse,* the *Carnival of Venice* and the *Panteïns de Violette,* all brilliantly executed, but decidedly lacking in local accent for a *tambourinaire* vouched for by Mistral. I taught

[1] *Thirty Years in Paris,* Chapter VI., "My Drummer."

him some of Saboly's Christmas ballads — *Saint José m'a dit* and *Ture-lure-lure le coq chante* — also *Les Pêcheurs de Cassis*, *Les Filles d'Avignon*, and the *Marche des Rois* which Bizet, a few years later, arranged for the orchestra with such marvellous skill, for our *Arlésienne*. Buisson, who was a clever musician enough, noted down the tunes as I hummed them for him, and practised them day and night in his lodgings on Rue Bergère, causing a great excitement among his neighbors, whom the shrill, buzzing music drove to exasperation. When he was thoroughly trained, I launched him on the town, where his odd French, his Ethiopian complexion, his thick black eyebrows, as dense and bushy as his moustaches, together with his exotic repertory, deceived even the Southerners in Paris, who believed him to be a real *tambourinaire;* but that deception did nothing, alas, to insure his success.

This type, as it was presented to me by nature, seemed somewhat complicated, especially as a secondary figure; therefore I simplified it for my book. As for the other characters in the novel, from Roumestan to little Audiberte, I say again that they are taken from several models, — as Montaigne says: "A bundle of sticks of different kinds." So too with Aps in Provence, Numa's native town, which I built with bits of Arles, Nîmes, Saint-Rémy, and Cavaillon, taking from one its arenas, from another its old Italian lanes, as narrow and stony as the dry beds of mountain torrents, its Monday market under the massive

plane-trees of its encircling wall; and from anywhere you please those glaring Provençal roads, bordered with tall reeds, covered with hot, snow-white, crackling dust, over which I travelled when I was twenty years old, owned an old mill, and still wore my long woollen cape on my back. The house in which I suppose Numa to have been born is that in which I lived as a child of eight, on Rue Séguier, opposite the Academy, at Nîmes; the Brothers' school, held in awe by the illustrious Boute-à-Cuire and his ferule pickled in vinegar, is the school of my childhood, one of my very earliest memories. "Early birds," say the Provençaux.

Such are the secret mechanism and the real properties, very simple as you see, of *Numa Roumestan*, which seems to me the least incomplete of my books, the one in which I have most fully expressed my meaning, in which I have displayed the greatest power of invention, in the aristocratic sense of the word. I wrote it in the spring and summer of 1880, on Avenue de l'Observatoire, above the noble chestnuts in the Luxembourg gardens, giant nosegays of pink and white clusters, with the cries of children, the bells of cocoa-dealers, and blasts of military music ascending through the foliage. Its composition left me without fatigue, like everything that comes from an inexhaustible spring. It appeared first in *L'Illustration*, with drawings by Émile Bayard, who lived near me, across the avenue.

Several times a week, in the morning, I went and installed myself in his studio, describing my characters to him as I wrote about them, interpreting and commenting upon the South for the benefit of that fanatical Parisian, who had never got beyond the Gascon who was taken out to execution and Levassor's *chansonnettes* on La Canebière.[1] Did I not play my dear South to you, Bayard, and act it and sing it, and the roar of the crowd at the bull-fights, at the contests between men and demi-men, and the chants of the penitents in the processions on Corpus Christi? And was it really you or one of your pupils whom I took to drink Carthagena wine and eat *barquettes* on Rue Turbigo, at the sign of "Les Produits du Midi?"

Published by Charpentier, with a dear dedication, which has always brought me good fortune and should appear at the beginning of all my books, the novel achieved some success. Zola honored it with a cordial and flattering analysis,

[1] Pierre Levassor, French comic actor, was born at Fontainebleau in 1808; died in 1870. At the age of 12 he was apprenticed to a tradesman in Paris. In 1830 he was travelling salesman for a firm of dealers in silks, and while at Marseille sang at a dinner the patriotic song of *Les Trois Couleurs* with so much fire and expression that some one who heard him insisted on his singing at the Grand-Théâtre. After this, while continuing in business, he tried to obtain employment at different theatres and finally aroused the interest of Déjazet, who brought about his début at the Palais Royal. He was especially successful as a caricaturist and a singer of *chansonnettes*.

La Canebière is a famous street of Marseille leading to the quays from the heart of the city.

reproving me simply for Hortense Le Quesnoy's love for the *tambourinaire*, which he thought unnatural; others after him made the same criticism. And yet, if my book were to be rewritten, I would not omit that mirage-like effect upon that quivering, ardent little heart, it too a victim of the Imagination.

But why consumptive? Why that sentimental and romantic death, that commonplace contrivance to arouse the reader's emotion? Why, because one has no control over his work, because, during its gestation, when the idea is tempting us and haunting us, a thousand things become involved in it, dragged to the surface and gathered *en route*, at the pleasure of the hazards of life, as sea-weed becomes entangled in the meshes of a net. While I was carrying Numa in my brain, I was sent to take the waters at Allevard; and there, in the public rooms, I saw youthful faces, drawn, wrinkled, as if carved with a knife; I heard poor, expressionless, husky voices, hoarse coughs, followed by the same furtive movement with the handkerchief or the glove, looking for the red spot at the corner of the lips. Of those pallid, impersonal ghosts, one took shape in my book, as if in spite of me, with the melancholy curriculum of the watering place and its lovely pastoral surroundings, and it has all remained there.

Numa Baragnon, my compatriot, an ex-minister, or almost that, misled by the similarity of Christian names, was the first to recognize himself in

Roumestan. He protested. The horses had never been taken from his carriage! But a fable, forwarded from Germany, a bungling article by a Dresden editor, soon replaced Baragnon's name with Gambetta's. I cannot understand such utter nonsense; I simply state that Gambetta did not believe it, that he was the first to be amused by it.

As we were dining one evening side by side, at our publisher's table, he asked me if Roumestan's "When I don't talk, I don't think," was a manufactured sentence or one that I had heard somewhere.

"Pure invention, my dear Gambetta."

"Well," he said, "at the council of ministers this morning, one of my colleagues, a Southerner from Montpellier, informed us *that he never thought except while he was speaking.* Evidently the idea is indigenous in your country."

And I heard his loud, cheery laugh for the last time.

All Southerners did not exhibit so much intelligence; I was indebted to Numa Roumestan for many anonymous ferocious letters, almost all postmarked somewhere in the sunny provinces. Even the Félibres became excited. Poems read at their meetings called me renegade and malefactor. "If we should try to serenade him, the instruments would fall from our hands," said old Borelly in a Provençal sonnet. And to think that I relied upon my compatriots to bear witness that I had neither caricatured nor lied! But

no; question them even now, when their wrath has subsided, and the most enthusiastic, the most extreme Southerner of them all will assume a serious expression, as he replies:—

"Oh! it is all very much exaggerated!"

THE FRANCS-TIREURS.

Written during the Siege of Paris.

WE were taking tea the other evening at the *tabellion's*[1] at Nanterre. I take pleasure in using the old word *tabellion*, because it fits in so well with the Pompadour atmosphere of the pretty village where the *rosières*[2] flourish, and of the old-fashioned salon where we sat about a fire of blazing roots, in a huge fireplace decorated with fleurs-de-lis. The master of the house was absent, but his shrewd and kindly face hung in a corner, presiding over the festival and smiling placidly, from an oval frame, upon the strange guests who filled his salon.

A curious company, in sooth, for a notary's evening party. Gold-laced military coats, beards of a week's growth, *képis*, hooded cloaks and high boots; and everywhere, on the piano, on the table, sabres and revolvers tossed carelessly among lace-trimmed cushions, boxes from Spa and embroidered baskets. It was all in strange contrast to that patriarchal abode, where one could still detect a faint odor of Nanterre pasties served

[1] *Tabellion* is the old word for *notaire*, notary.

[2] *Rosière* was the name given to the young girl who was awarded the prize for virtue in a village.

by a lovely notaress to *rosières* in fresh organdie dresses. Alas! there are no longer any *rosières* at Nanterre. They have been replaced by a battalion of *francs-tireurs* from Paris, and the staff of that battalion were our hosts at the tea-party that evening.

The chimney-corner had never seemed so pleasant to me. Outside, the wind blew over the snow and brought to our ears, with the quavering tones of the village clock, the *qui vive* of the sentries, and at intervals the muffled report of a *chassepot*. In the salon there was little conversation. It is hard service, that of the outposts, and you are tired when night comes. And then, that savor of homely comfort which rises from the tea-kettle in clouds of white steam had taken hold of us all and hypnotized us as it were in the notary's capacious arm-chairs.

Suddenly, hurried steps, a slamming of doors, and with gleaming eye, gasping for breath, a telegraph clerk bursts into the room:

"To arms! to arms! The post at Reuil is attacked!"

It was an outpost stationed by the *francs-tireurs*, ten minutes from Nanterre, in the Reuil railway station — for all practical purposes, in Pomerania. In a twinkling the staff was on its feet, girded and armed, and rushing into the street to assemble the companies. No need of trumpets for that. The first company is quartered at the curé's; two hasty kicks on the curé's door.

"To arms! — turn out!"

And with that they hurried away to the town clerk's, where the men of the second had their quarters.

Oh! that dark little village with its pointed steeple covered with snow, those little gardens laid out in quincunxes, where the gates, as you opened them, rang like shop-doors, those strange houses, those wooden stairways up which I ran, feeling my way behind the adjutant's long sword, the hot breath of the chambers in which we gave the alarm, the muskets ringing in the darkness, the men heavy with sleep stumbling to their posts, while four or five stupid peasants, standing at the corner of a street with lanterns, said to one another: "They 're attacking — they 're attacking," — all this produced the effect of a dream on me at the moment, but the impression that my mind retained was clearly defined and ineradicable.

There was the square in front of the mayor's office, all in darkness save the brightly lighted windows of the telegraph office; an outer room where messengers were waiting, lantern in hand; in a corner, the Irish surgeon of the battalion phlegmatically preparing his instrument case; and — a charming picture amid all that hurly-burly — a little cantinière, dressed in blue as at the orphanage, lay sleeping in front of the fire, a *chassepot* between her legs; and lastly, in the rear room, the telegraph office, the camp beds, the great table flooded with light, the two clerks

bending over their machines, and behind them the commandant, looking over their shoulders, following with an anxious eye the long strips of paper which run off the reel and give the latest news from the point of attack from moment to moment. It seems that matters are getting decidedly warm there. Despatches on despatches. The telegraph jingles its electric bells frantically and keeps up its constant clicking like a sewing-machine, as if it would shatter everything.

"Hurry up," says Reuil.

"We are coming," Nanterre replies.

And the companies start off at a gallop.

I agree that war is unquestionably the most depressing and most absurd thing on earth. For instance, I know nothing so lugubrious as a night in January passed in the trenches, shivering like an old wolf; nothing so ridiculous as a great lump of lead falling on your head from a distance of eight kilometres; but to go forth to battle on a fine frosty evening with a warm heart and full stomach, to rush headlong into the darkness, into uncertainty, in the company of gallant fellows whose elbows you can feel all the while, is a delicious pleasure, and as it were a harmless drunkenness, — but a special sort of drunkenness, which makes the drunken sober and causes weak eyes to see distinctly.

For my part, I could see perfectly well that night. And yet there was only a tiny bit of moon, and the snow-covered earth furnished the sky with light — a cold, raw stage-light, extending

to the farthest limit of the fields, against which the slightest details of the landscape, a fragment of wall, a post, a row of willows, stood out clean-cut and black, as if stripped of their shadow. Along the narrow path beside the high-road the *francs-tireurs* sped at the double-quick. We could hear naught but the vibration of the telegraph wires running by the roadside, the panting breath of the men, the whistle to the sentinels, and from time to time a shell from Mont-Valérien passing over our heads like a bird of night, with a terrible flapping of wings. As we advanced, the flashes of firearms gleamed like stars in the darkness, on the level of the ground. Then, on the left, far away in the fields, the flames of a great conflagration soared silently aloft.

"In front of the mill, as skirmishers!" ordered our commanding officer.

"We 're going to get a thrashing!" said my neighbor at the left with a faubourg accent.

With one bound the officer was before us.

"Who was it who spoke? You?"

"Yes, captain, I —"

"Good — off with you — back to Nanterre."

"But, captain —"

"No, no — off you go at once. I have no use for you. Ah! so you 're afraid of a thrashing! away with you!"

And the poor devil was obliged to leave the ranks; but within five minutes he had stealthily resumed his place, and thenceforth asked for nothing better than a thrashing.

But no. It was written that no one should be thrashed that night. When we reached the barricade the affair had just come to an end. The Prussians, who hoped to surprise our little outpost, finding it on the alert and out of reach of a *coup de main*, had prudently withdrawn, and we were just in time to see them disappear in the distance, as silent and black as cockroaches. However, as a fresh attack was feared, we were ordered to remain at the Reuil station, and we finished the night on guard, musket in hand, some on the roadway and others in the waiting-room.

Poor Reuil station, which I had known so cheerful and bright, the aristocratic station of the boatmen of Bougival, where the pretty Parisians aired their muslin ruffles and their jaunty feathered caps — how could one recognize it in that dismal cave, that blinded, mattressed tomb, redolent of powder and petroleum and damp straw, where we talked in low tones, huddled close together and with no other light than the fire in our pipes and the slender thread of light from the officers' corner? — From hour to hour, by way of diversion, we were sent out in squads to do scout duty along the Seine, or patrol the town of Reuil, whose empty streets and almost deserted houses were illuminated by the cold gleams of a conflagration lighted by the Prussians at Bois-Préau. The night passed thus without incident; and in the morning we were sent back.

When I returned to Nanterre it was still dark.

On the square in front of the *Mairie*, the window of the telegraph office still shone like a light-house, and in the quarters of the battalion staff Monsieur le Tabellion was still smiling placidly in the corner opposite his fireplace, where a few hot embers still glowed.

find difficulty in grasping the reality of it. The weather is soft, the sky very bright. These Montmartre troopers who surround me seem like good fellows. They are singing and playing games. The officers are walking back and forth, laughing together. Only a high wall, riddled with bullets and all ground to powder at the top, rises like a witness and describes the crime to me. It was against this wall that they were shot.

It seems that at the last moment General Lecomte, who had been unwavering in his resolution up to that time, felt that his courage was oozing away. He tried to struggle, to fly, ran a few steps in the garden, and then, being instantly recaptured, roughly handled and dragged back to his place, fell upon his knees and talked about his children.

"I have five," he sobbed.

The father's heart had burst the soldier's tunic. There were fathers in that frantic mob also; a few moved voices answered his appeal; but the implacable deserters would listen to nothing:

"If we don't shoot him to-day, he 'll order us shot to-morrow."

They forced him against the wall. The next moment a sergeant of the line approached him:—

"General," he said, "if you will promise us— "

But, suddenly changing his mind, he stepped back and discharged his *chassepot* at his breast. The others had only to finish him.

Clément Thomas, on the other hand, did not flinch for one second. Standing against the same

wall with Lecomte, within two steps of his body, he showed a bold front to death to the very end and talked in a most noble strain. When the muskets were aimed at him, he instinctively put his left arm before his face, and the old republican died in the attitude of Cæsar. On the spot where they fell, against that wall, as cold and bare as the walls of a shooting-gallery, a few peach-trees still wave their branches, and among the highest of them an early snow-white blossom is opening, unharmed by the bullets, unblackened by the powder.

On leaving Rue des Rosiers, by the silent roads which follow a zigzag course up the hillside covered with gardens and with terraces, I reach the old cemetery of Montmartre, which was opened several days since for the burial of the two generals. It is a bare, treeless village cemetery, containing nothing but graves. Like those grasping peasants, who, while ploughing their fields, encroach a little every day upon the cross-road, death has invaded everything, even the paths. The graves are piled upon one another. Everything is full to overflowing. One does not know where to put his feet.

I know of nothing so sad as these old cemeteries. You feel that there are so many people there, and yet you see nobody. Those who are there seem to be dead twice over.

"What are you looking for?" I am asked by a sort of gardener-gravedigger, in the cap of a National Guard, who is patching a piece of turf.

My reply surprises him. He hesitates a moment, looks about him, then says, lowering his voice:

"Yonder, beside the *capote.*"

What he calls a *capote* is a sort of pavilion of painted iron sheltering some faded bits of glassware and some old filigree flowers. Beside it is a large flat gravestone, bearing marks of having recently been moved. No inclosure, no inscription. Nothing but two bunches of violets, wrapped in white paper, with a stone placed on their stems so that the high winds that blow on the hill may not blow them away. There they lie side by side. Those two soldiers have been billeted in that temporary tomb, pending the time when they can be restored to their families.[1]

[1] The Commune of Paris, an organized band of socialists, outlaws, and proletaires revolted against the new republican government on March 18, 1871, just as the last of the German army of occupation were evacuating Paris. They were supported by a large part of the National Guards, who had been allowed to retain their arms.

On the night of the 17th and 18th, General Lecomte was ordered by the government to take possession of the cannon which the National Guard had collected on the hill of Montmartre. When he reached the hill, he waited for the horses which were to draw the guns away, but they did not come. It was reported that the Assembly intended to disarm Paris in order to proclaim the monarchy; an angry and constantly increasing mob surrounded Lecomte and his soldiers, who threw up their muskets and joined the National Guard. Thereupon Lecomte was seized and taken to the house on Rue des Rosiers, where the Central Committee was sitting; and there a handful of men, exasperated to frenzy, dragged him to the end of the garden and shot him down.

General Clément Thomas had been made commander-in-chief of the 1st army corps — 266 battalions of the National Guard —

on November 4, 1870. In February, 1871, he retired to private life; but, on the outbreak of the insurrection, March 18, 1871, hearing that a former comrade-in-arms had been arrested by the insurgents, he went out in citizen's dress, intending to go to Montmartre. He was recognized by a member of the National Guard, seized as a traitor and hurried before the Central Committee, where he was instantly condemned without even the pretence of a trial; whereupon a party of National Guardsmen dragged him into the garden, placed him against a wall beside General Lecomte, and shot him almost at the muzzles of their guns.

The Communists soon became absolute masters of Paris, and maintained their hold upon the city about two months. On May 22 the army of the government, under MacMahon, entered Paris by several gates, but the insurgents threw up barricades and held out for five days, during which time they committed many acts of atrocious vandalism and cruelty, destroying much property and many lives. The insurrection was definitely suppressed on May 27.

AN ESCAPE.

Written during the Commune.

ON one of the last days of March, five or six of us were at table in front of the Café Riche, watching the battalions of the Commune march past. There had been no fighting as yet, but there had been murder on Rue des Rosiers, on Place Vendôme and at the prefecture of police. The farce was turning to tragedy, and the boulevards no longer laughed.

Crowding about the red flag, with knapsacks slung saltire-wise, the Communards marched with firm step, filling the roadway from curb to curb; and as one gazed upon that whole people under arms, so far from the working quarters, those cartridge-boxes strapped about woollen blouses, those toilworn hands clutching the butts of their muskets, one could but think of the empty workshops, the abandoned factories. That march past in itself resembled a threat. We all understood it, and the same melancholy, ill-defined presentiments oppressed our hearts.

At that moment a great, lazy, bloated dandy, well known from Tortoni's to the Madeleine, approached our table. He was one of the most melancholy specimens of the fop of the Empire,

albeit a secondhand fop, who had never done anything else than pick up on the boulevard all the original conceits of the upper circle of dandydom, wearing low collars like Lutteroth, women's *peignoirs* like Mouchy, bracelets like Narishkine, and keeping Grammont-Caderousse's card on his mantel for five years; and with all the rest, as spotted as an old mullet and affecting the languid speech of the Directory: "*Pa'ole d'honneu'* — *Bonjou' ma'ame;*" all the mud of Tattersall's on his boots, and just enough learning to sign his name on the mirrors of the Café Anglais, which did not prevent him from giving out that he was very strong in theology, and from carrying from cabaret to cabaret that contemptuous, bored, disillusioned air, which was the height of fashion in those days.

During the siege my fine fellow had succeeded in being taken on to some staff or other — an opportunity to obtain a shelter for his saddle-horses, — and from time to time his loose-jointed shadow could be seen stalking about the neighborhood of Place Vendôme with all the fine gentlemen with gilt breastplates: afterward I lost sight of him. To meet him suddenly there in the midst of the *émeute*, still the same as ever in that Paris turned topsy-turvy, produced upon me the depressing and at the same time comical effect of an old *shapka* of the first Empire making his fifth of May pilgrimage on our modern boulevards.[1] So we had not yet done with that race of swells!

[1] Napoleon I. died May 5, 1821.

There were still some of them left! Indeed, I believe that, if I had been allowed to choose, I would have preferred those wild devils of Communards who marched up to the fortifications with a crust of bread in their canvas wallets. They at least had something in their heads, a vague, insane ideal which hovered about them and assumed a gory hue in the folds of that red rag for which they were destined to die. But he, that empty bell, that brain of dough —

On this day our man was more languid, more indolent, more nauseating with *chic* than ever. He had a little watering place hat with blue ribbons, stiff moustaches, hair trimmed *à la Russe*, a too short jacket that left everything in the air, and, to complete his outfit, was leading at the end of a silk cord a little Havana terrier, no larger than a rat, lost in his long hair, and with the same bored, tired air as his master. Thus equipped, he planted himself languidly in front of our table, watched the Communards march past, indulged in some idiotic remark or other, and then, with an inimitable swagger and nonchalance, informed us that those people were really beginning to annoy him, and that he was going at once "to offer his sword to the admiral!" It was said; the murder was out. Neither Lasouche nor Priston ever invented anything more comical. Thereupon he executed a half-turn and walked languidly away with his ill-favored little dog.

I do not know whether he did in fact offer his sword to the admiral; but, in any event, M.

Saisset used it to no good purpose, for a week later the flag of the Commune was flying over all the municipal offices, the drawbridges were raised, the battle was raging on all sides, and from hour to hour we saw the sidewalks grow wider and the streets become deserted. Everyone escaped as best he could, in market-gardeners' wagons, in the luggage vans from the embassies. There were some who disguised themselves as sailors, as firemen, as navvies. The most romantic scaled the fortifications at night with rope-ladders. The boldest assembled in bands of thirty or more to carry a gate by assault; others, more practical, quietly purchased their safety with a hundred-sou piece. Many joined funeral processions and followed them into the suburbs, wandering across the fields with umbrellas and silk hats, black from head to foot, like bailiffs in the provinces. Once outside the walls all these Parisians looked at one another and laughed, breathed freely, capered about and made faces at Paris; but homesickness for the asphalt speedily seized upon them, and this emigration, which began like playing truant, soon became as irksome and depressing as exile.

With my mind engrossed by the thought of escape, I was walking along Rue de Rivoli one morning in a pelting rain, when I was brought to a halt by a familiar face. At that hour there was nobody in the street save the street-sweepers, who swept the mud into little glistening piles along the sidewalks, and no vehicles save the

lines of carts which were filled one after another by mud-begrimed individuals. Horror of horrors! under the soiled blouse of one of those men I recognized my dandy, and well disguised he was! — a shapeless hat, a handkerchief twisted around his neck, the ample trousers which the workingmen of Paris call — pardon the word — a *salopette;* all worn and ragged and smeared with a layer of mud, which the poor devil did not deem thick enough, for I surprised him stamping in the puddles and splashing himself to the hair. Indeed it was that strange performance which had called my attention to him.

"Good-morning, viscount," I said in an undertone as I passed.

The viscount turned pale under his filth, and looked about him in alarm; then, seeing that everybody was busily at work, he recovered a little self-assurance and told me that he had not chosen to put his sword — his sword again! — at the service of the Commune, and that his butler's brother, who had a contract for cleaning the streets at Montreuil, had fortunately provided him with that means of leaving Paris. He had no time to say more. The carts were full, the procession was moving. My man had just time to run to his team, fall into line, crack the whip, and *dia! hue!* he was off. The adventure interested me. In order to see the end of it, I followed the carts at a distance as far as the Vincennes gate.

Each man walked beside his horses, whip in

hand, guiding the team with a leather thong. To make the viscount's task easier, they had placed him last of all; and it was a pitiful sight to see the poor devil trying hard to do as the others did, imitating their voices, their gait, that bent, crouching, sleepy gait of men lulled into drowsiness by the rumble of the wheels as they keep step with heavily laden beasts. Sometimes they halted to allow battalions coming down from the fortifications to pass. At such times he would seem to be very much engrossed by his duties, would swear and crack his whip and play the carter as well as possible; then at intervals the dandy would crop out once more. The grimy creature ogled the women. In front of a cartridge-factory on Rue de Charonne, he stopped a moment to stare at some working-girls who were going in. The strange aspect of the great faubourg, the swarm of people in the streets seemed to surprise him too. That was evident from the terrified glances which he cast to right and left, as if he had just arrived in some strange land.

And yet, viscount, you have driven through those long streets leading to Vincennes many a time on fine Sundays in the spring and autumn, returning from the races, with the green card in your hat, the leather bag slung over your shoulder, snapping your whip-lash in the air. But then you were perched so high on your phaeton, there was such a wilderness of flowers, ribbons, curls and gauze veils about you, all those wheels that grazed one another enveloped you in a cloud

of such luminous, aristocratic dust, that you did not see the dark windows thrown open as you drew nigh, the interiors of working men's homes where they and their families were sitting down to supper just at that hour; and when you had passed, when that long trail of luxury, of light silk dresses, of gleaming axles, of gaudy head-gear disappeared in the direction of Paris, carrying with it its golden atmosphere, you did not see how much darker the faubourg became, how much more bitter the bread, how much heavier the implement of toil, nor what a store of wrath and hatred you left behind you there.

A volley of oaths and of strokes of a whip cut short my soliloquy. We were nearing the Vincennes gate. The drawbridge was lowered, and in the half-light, amid the torrents of rain, the multitude of carts crowded together and National Guards inspecting permits, I spied my poor viscount struggling with his three great horses, trying to make them turn. The poor devil had lost his place in the line. He swore, he pulled on his strap, great drops of sweat rolled down his cheeks. His manner was no longer lackadaisical, I promise you. The Communards were already beginning to notice him. A circle had formed about him and people were laughing at him; the situation was becoming critical. Luckily the head carter came to his assistance, snatched the strap out of his hands, pushed him roughly aside, and then, with a mighty crack of the whip, started the team across the bridge at a gallop, with the

viscount splashing through the mud behind. Having passed through the gate, he resumed his place, and the procession was lost to my sight in the barren tract outside the fortifications.

It was truly a pitiable exit. I watched it from the top of a bank; those fields strewn with old plaster in which the wheels sank deep, that sparse and slimy grass, those men bent double by the downpour, that line of carts moving heavily along like hearses. One would have said that it was a shameful funeral, the whole Paris of the Lower Empire drowning in its filth.[1]

[1] The *Bas-Empire* means, strictly speaking, the Roman Empire in its later period of decadence; the term is here applied to the Second Empire in France, under Louis Napoléon.

SUMMER PALACES

Written during the Commune.

AFTER the capture of Pekin and the pillage of the Summer Palace by the French troops, when General Cousin-Montauban came to Paris to be baptized Comte de Palikao, he distributed in Parisian society, by way of baptismal sweetmeats, the marvellous treasures of jade and red lacquer with which his trunks were laden, and throughout one whole season there was a grand exhibition of Chinese curiosities at the Tuileries and in some favored salons.

People went to them as to a sale of some cocotte's belongings, or to one of Abbé Bauer's conferences. I can still see, in the half-light of the partly deserted rooms where these treasures were displayed, little Frou-Frous with huge chignons fluttering about and elbowing one another among the shades of blue silk with silver flowers, the gauze lanterns decorated with enamel tufts and bells, the folding-screens of transparent horn, the hand-screens of cloth, with sentences painted on them, and all that medley of priceless trifles, so well adapted to the needs of sedentary women with tiny feet. People sat on porcelain chairs, they handled lacquer caskets and work-tables

with designs inlaid in gold; they tried on, in sport, white silk shawls and necklaces of Tartary pearls; and there were little shrieks of surprise, stifled laughter, a bamboo screen overturned with the train of a dress, and upon every lip the magic words Summer Palace, which ran about like the current caused by a fan, opening to the imagination vague visions of enchanted avenues of white ivory and many-hued jasper.

This year, society in Berlin, Munich and Stuttgart has had exhibitions of the same sort. For several months past the buxom matrons beyond the Rhine have been giving vent to admiring *Mein Gotts!* before services of Sèvres porcelain, Louis XVI. clocks, salons in white and gold, Chantilly laces, chests of orangewood and myrtle and silver, which countless Palikaos of King William's army have collected in the outskirts of Paris during the pillage of our summer palaces.

For they were not content to pillage a single one. Saint-Cloud, Meudon — those gardens of the Celestial Empire — were not enough for them. Our conquerors entered everywhere; they ransacked, plundered everything, from the great historic châteaux, which still retain a faint suggestion of France in their fresh green lawns and their century-old trees, to the humblest of our little white cottages; and now, all along the Seine, from bank to bank, our summer palaces, open to all the winds that blow, roofless and windowless, display their bare walls and their dismantled terraces.

The devastation is especially lamentable in the neighborhood of Montgeron, Draveil and Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. His Royal Highness the Prince of Saxony worked that region with his horde, and it seems that His Highness did things well. In the German army he is known by no other name than "the robber." Indeed, the Prince of Saxony strikes me as being a potentate without illusions, a gentleman of a practical turn of mind, who fully realizes that some day or other the ogre of Berlin will make but one mouthful of all the little Hop-o'-my-Thumbs of Southern Germany, and has taken his precautions accordingly. Now, whatever may happen, monseigneur is beyond the reach of want. When the day comes that he is paid off and dismissed, he can choose between opening a French publishing house at Leipzig fair, making clocks at Nuremberg or pianos at Munich, and becoming a pawnbroker at Frankfort-on-the-Main. Our summer palaces have supplied him with funds, and that is why he conducted his pillaging operations with such energy.

But I am less able to understand why His Highness was so bent upon depopulating our pheasant-preserves and rabbit-warrens that he left not a feather or a tuft of hair in our woods.

Poor forest of Sénart, so peaceful, so well kept, so proud of its little ponds stocked with red fishes, and its green-coated keepers! How comfortable they were in their home, all those hares and pheasants of the Crown! What a pleasant monk-

ish life they led! What perfect security! Sometimes, in the silence of a summer afternoon, you would hear the ferns rustling, and a whole battalion of young pheasants would pass, fluttering among your legs, while over yonder, at the end of a shaded alley, two or three hares strolled tranquilly to and fro, like abbés in a seminary garden. To think of shooting such innocent creatures!

Why, even the very poachers shrank from doing it, and on the opening day of the hunting season, when M. Rouher or the Marquis de la Valette arrived with their guests, the head keeper — I had almost said the stage manager — pointed out beforehand a few superannuated hen pheasants and a few crested old hares, who went to the *rond-point* of the Great Oak to wait for the gentlemen, and fell beneath their volleys with a good grace, crying "Vive l'Empereur!" That is all the game that was killed during the year.

Imagine the dazed bewilderment of the poor beasts when two or three hundred beaters in dirty caps came rushing over their carpets of pink heather one morning, destroying nests, overturning fences, shouting to one another from clearing to clearing in a barbarous tongue, and when, in the depths of those mysterious thickets where Madame de Pompadour used to watch for Louis XV. to pass, they saw the gleam of the sabre-tasches and pointed helmets of the Saxon staff! In vain did the hares try to fly, in vain did the frightened rabbits raise their trembling little

paws, crying "Long live His Royal Highness the Prince of Saxony!" The hardhearted Saxon would not listen to them, and the massacre went on for several days in succession. Now, it is all over; Great Sénart and Little Sénart are deserted. Nothing is left save jays and squirrels, which the faithful vassals of King William dared not touch, because the jays are black and white, the colors of Prussia, and because the squirrels' fur is of that light chestnut so dear to Herr von Bismarck.

I learned these details from Père La Loué, a perfect type of the forest-keeper of Seine-et-Oise, with his drawling accent, his sly air, his little eyes blinking in an earth-colored face. The good man is so jealous of his keeper's duties, he invokes so often, and in every connection, the five cabalistic letters that glitter on his copper badge, that the country people have nicknamed him Père La Loi [1] — La Loué in the patois of Seine-et-Oise. When we came into Paris in the month of September, to shut ourselves up for the siege, old La Loué buried his furniture and his clothes, sent his family away, and remained alone to await the Prussians.

"I know my forest," he said, waving his carbine, "let them come and find me!"

Thereupon we parted. I was not free from anxiety concerning him. Often, during that hard winter, I imagined that poor man all alone in the forest, reduced to living on roots, with no protection against the cold beyond his cotton blouse,

[1] Father Law.

with his badge of office upon it. It made my flesh creep simply to think of it.

Yesterday morning he appeared at my house, fresh, jaunty, stouter than of old, with a brand-new overcoat, and the famous badge still gleaming like a barber's basin on his breast. What had he been doing all these weeks? I dared not ask him, but he did not look as if he had suffered terribly. Excellent Père La Loué! He knew his forest so well! Perhaps he acted as guide to the Prince of Saxony.

It may be that that is an unjust idea of mine; but I know my peasants, and I know of what they are capable. The intrepid painter Eugène Leroux, who was wounded in one of our first sorties and was nursed for some time in a vine-dresser's family in Beauce, told us an anecdote the other day which faithfully depicts the whole race. The people with whom he was staying could not understand why he had fought when he was not obliged to.

"Are you an old soldier?" they asked him again and again.

"Not at all. I make pictures, I have never done anything else."

"Very well! then, when they made you sign a paper agreeing to go to war — "

"But no one made me sign anything."

"What! why, in that case, when you went out to fight, you must" — and here they winked at one another — "you must have had a little too much to drink!"

There you have the French peasant! In the outskirts of Paris he is still worse. The few brave fellows there were in the suburbs came behind the fortifications to eat dog's food with us; but the rest of them I distrust. They remained behind to show the Prussians the way to our wine-cellars and to glean after the pillagers of our poor summer palaces.

My own palace was such a modest affair, so completely buried in the acacias, that it may perhaps have escaped destruction; but I shall not go to see until the Prussians have gone, and have been gone a long while.[1] I prefer to give the countryside time to be purified. When I think that all our lovely little nooks, those islets of reeds and slender willows, where we used to go in the evening, and lie on the water's edge to listen to the tree-frogs; the moss-carpeted paths where the thought, as one walked, flitted along the hedges and clung to every branch; the great grassy clearings where one could sleep so comfortably at the foot of the great oaks, with the bees flying hither and thither over one's head, making as it were a dome of music — when I think that all these have been theirs, that they have sat everywhere; then that lovely countryside seems to me a melancholy, faded spot. That contamination horrifies me even more than the pillage. I fear lest I may find that I no longer love my nest.

Ah! if only the Parisians, at the time of the

[1] See Preface to *Robert Helmont.*

siege, could have taken that lovely suburban countryside within the city gates! if only we could have rolled up the greenswards, the grass-grown roads empurpled by the setting sun, have taken away the ponds that gleam like hand-mirrors under the trees, have wound our little brooks around a spool like silver threads, and locked them all up in the wardrobe! what a delight it would be for us now to replace the greensward and the underbrush, and to recreate an Île de France which the Prussians never saw!

THE SHIPWRECK.

Champrosay, May 25, 1871.

And this is the charming garden
Sweet with the myrtle and the rose.

ALAS! this year the garden is still full of roses, but the house is full of Prussians. I have carried my table to the foot of the garden, and that is where I am writing, in the graceful shadow and amid the perfume of a tall genesta bush, filled with the humming of bees, which does not obstruct my view of the Pomeranian stockings hanging out to dry on my poor gray blinds.

To be sure I had sworn not to come here until long after *they* had gone; but it was absolutely necessary to evade the horrible Cluseret conscription, and I had no other place of refuge. And so it is that I, in common with many other Parisians, have been spared none of the miseries of this sad time: the agony of the siege, civil war, emigration, and, to cap the climax, foreign occupation. It is of no use to be philosophical, to pretend to take one's stand above and outside of the affairs of life, one cannot avoid being strangely impressed when — after travelling six hours over these lovely French roads, all white with the dust caused by Prussian battalions — one arrives

at his own door and finds there, under the hanging clusters of ebony trees and acacias, a German sign in Gothic characters:

"5th COMPANY,
BOEHM,
SERGEANT-MAJOR,
AND THREE MEN."

This M. Boehm is a tall, taciturn, eccentric fellow, who keeps the shutters of his bedroom closed all the time, and sleeps and eats without a light. And with it all a too free-and-easy manner, a cigar always between his teeth, and so exacting! His Lordship must have a room for himself, one for his secretary, one for his servant. We are forbidden to enter by this door, to go out by that one. He actually tried to prevent our going into the garden! At last the mayor appeared, the *Hauptmann* took a hand, and here we are at home. It is not very cheerful at home this year. Do what you will, the proximity of these fellows embarrasses you, wounds you. The straw that they chop all about you, on your premises, is mixed with what you eat, withers the trees, blurs the page of your book, gets into your eyes, makes you long to weep. Even the child, although he does not understand what the trouble is, has the same strange feeling of oppression. He plays quietly in a corner of the garden, restrains his laughter, sings in an undertone, and in the morning, instead of his usual uproarious awakenings, overflowing with life, he lies very

quiet, with his eyes wide open behind his bed-curtains, and asks very softly from time to time:

"Can I wake up now?"

If only we had nothing but the sorrows of the occupation to ruin our springtime! but the hardest, the most cruel thing of all is the roaring of cannon and musketry which reaches us whenever the wind blows from Paris, making the whole horizon tremble, rending pitilessly the pink morning haze, disturbing with storms these lovely, clear May nights, these nights of nightingales and crickets.

Last night it was peculiarly terrible. The reports came in rapid succession, fierce, desperate, accompanied by an incessant flashing. I had opened my window toward the Seine, and I listened with a heavy heart to those muffled sounds, borne to my ears over the deserted river and the silent countryside. At times it seemed to me as if there were a great ship in distress on the horizon, firing her alarm guns frantically, and I remembered that, ten years ago, on just such a night, I stood on the terrace of a hotel at Bastia, listening to a melancholy cannonade brought to us by the sea, like a despairing shriek of agony and wrath. It continued all night; and in the morning they found on the beach, amid a confused mass of shattered masts and torn sails, some shoes with light bows, a wooden sword such as Harlequin wears, and quantities of rags spangled with gold and bedecked with ribbons, all drenched with salt water and smeared with blood and filth. It was, as I learned afterward,

all that remained from the wreck of the *Louise*, a large packet bound from Leghorn to Bastia with a troupe of Italian pantomimists on board.

To him who knows what the battle with the sea at night really is, the fruitless, groping struggle against an irresistible force; to him who pictures truly to himself the last moments of a ship, the ascending water, the lingering death, without grandeur, death soaked and bedraggled; to him who is familiar with the paroxysms of frenzy, the insane hopes followed by brutish prostration, the drunken agony, the delirium, the hands blindly beating the air, the clenched fingers clinging to the intangible, that Harlequin's sabre, amid all that blood-stained debris, had a comical yet terrifying significance. One could imagine the storm striking the ship like a thunder-clap during a performance on board, the improvised theatre invaded by the sea, the orchestra flooded, music-stands, violins, double-basses floating about pell-mell; Columbine tossing her bare arms over her head, running from one end of the stage to the other, dead with fear, and still pink under her paint; Pierrot, whose cheeks terror could not blanch, clinging to a post, watching the water rise, and with the ghastly vertigo already visible in his great eyes, enlarged with paint for the farce; Isabella, entangled in her stage skirts, with her head-dress of flowers, weeping bitterly, yet laughable by reason of her very charms, rolling about the deck like a package, clutching at all the benches and stammering childish prayers;

Scaramouche, with a keg of water between his legs, laughing a dazed laugh and singing at the top of his voice; while Harlequin, stricken with madness, continues to play his part with perfect gravity, cuts his capers, and brandishes his sword, and old Cassandra, swept away by the sea, goes down, down between two waves, with her dress of nut-brown velvet, and her toothless mouth wide open.

As I say, that shipwreck of strolling players, that funereal masquerade, that performance *in extremis*, all those convulsive gestures, those grimaces passed before me last night with every roar of the cannon. I felt that the Commune, on the point of foundering, was firing its alarm guns. Moment by moment I could see the sea rising, the breach widening, while the men at the Hôtel de Ville, clinging to their stools, still issued decrees upon decrees amid the uproar of the wind and waves; then, one last shock and the great ship going down with its red flags, its gold scarfs, its delegates in judges' gowns, and generals' uniforms, its battalions of gaitered and beplumed amazons, its circus troops, buried in Spanish képis or Garibaldian caps, its Polish lancers, its fantastic Turcos, drunken, raving, singing and dancing madly. All these went overboard in a confused mass, and naught remained of all that tumult, madness, crime, braggadocio, yes, and heroism, save a red scarf, a képi with eight stripes and a jacket with gold-lace frogs, found one morning on the shore, all besmeared with slime and blood.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — KINGS IN EXILE.

Of all my books this is unquestionably the one which I found most difficulty in standing on its feet, the one which I carried longest in my head in the stage of title and vague outline, as it appeared to me one October evening on Place du Carrousel, in the tragic rent in the Parisian sky caused by the fall of the Tuileries.

Dethroned princes exiling themselves in Paris after their downfall, taking up their quarters on Rue de Rivoli, and when they woke in the morning and raised the shades at their windows, discovering those ruins — such was the first vision of *Kings in Exile.* Not so much a romance as an historical study, for romance is the history of men and history the romance of kings. Not an historical study as the term is generally understood among us, a dry, dusty, meddling compilation, one of those bulky tomes dear to the Institute, which it crowns every year without opening them, and upon which might be written *for external use,* as on the blue glass bottle of the pharmacy; but a book of modern history, intensely alive, exciting, founded upon a terribly earnest and arduous overhauling of documents which had

to be torn from the very entrails of life, instead of being disinterred from the dusty recesses of archives.

To my eyes the difficulty of the work consisted principally in this search for models, for accurate information, in the tedium of all the interviewing made necessary by the novelty of a subject so far removed from me and my surroundings, from my habits of life and mind. As a young man I had often brushed against the ghastly black wig of the Duke of Brunswick[1] traversing the corridors of night restaurants in the hot breath of gas, patchouli and spiced meats; at Bignon's, on the couch at the rear, Citron-le-Taciturne had appeared to me one evening, eating a slice of *foie gras* opposite a girl from the street; and again, at the conclusion of a Sunday session at the Conservatoire, the tall, haughty figure of the blind King of Hanover, feeling his way between the

[1] Charles Frederick Augustus William, born in 1804, son of Duke Frederick William, who was killed at Quatre-Bras, on the eve of Waterloo, and nephew of Caroline of Brunswick, the unhappy consort of George IV. of England. In 1807 the peace of Tilsit deprived his father of his dukedom and the boy was taken to Sweden by his mother; at her death he wandered about from city to city, receiving little education and leading a wild life.

At his father's death he assumed the title of duke, but was not allowed to exercise any control of the government until 1823. He travelled until 1827, when he returned to Brunswick and made himself so odious by his arbitrary rule that the States appealed to the German diet. The duke refused to submit his dispute with his subjects to arbitration, and was obliged to flee in 1830 on the arrival of a body of federal troops. After visiting Paris and Brussels he sought to regain his power, thereby arousing a revolution which led to his being deposed and succeeded by his

pillars of the peristyle, on the arm of the pathetic Princess Frederika, who told him when he must bow.[1] My notions were all very vague, I had no definite knowledge as to the private life of these refugee princes, as to the way in which they bore their disgrace, as to the effect that exile and the air of Paris had produced upon them, and as to the amount of gold lace that still remained on their court robes, and of court ceremonial in their hired lodgings.

It required much time and innumerable jour-

brother William, the last duke. Duke Charles spent the rest of his life in exile, in Paris and London, trying to recover his dukedom. He died in 1873.

[1] George V. of Hanover was the second son of Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, fifth son of George III., and consequently first cousin to Queen Victoria, who was three days older than he. His father became King of Hanover on the death of his brother William IV. of England, and George V. succeeded to the title on his father's death in 1851. He was born May 27, 1819. The first Duke of Cumberland, who was cordially hated in England, showed himself in Hanover a harsh and narrow-minded despot. The son inherited his father's extravagant ideas of the royal prerogative. He finally succeeded, in 1857, in surrounding himself with ministers after his own heart, but his attempts to impose 17th century Catholicism aroused discontent. In 1866 Hanover voted with Austria in regard to the question of mobilizing the federal army; and as a result was ordered by Prussia to preserve an unarmed neutrality in the war which ensued between Prussia and Austria. The refusal of Hanover to comply with this order furnished Prussia with the long-desired pretext to seize the ancient kingdom; it was annexed to Prussia and the monarchy was abolished. The king, who was quite blind but an excellent musician, lived until 1878.

His daughter Frederika was born in 1848 and remained unmarried until after her father's death, when she married (in 1880) Freiherr von Pawel-Rammingen.

neys to obtain this information; I had to press into the service all my acquaintances in old Paris, from top to bottom of the social ladder, from the upholsterer who furnished the royal mansion on Rue de Presbourg to the great nobleman and diplomatist who was invited to attend as a witness at Queen Isabella's abdication;[1] I had to catch social gossip on the wing, to look through police minutes and tradesmen's bills; then, when I had gone to the bottom of all those royal existences, had discovered instances of proud destitution, of heroic devotion, side by side with manias, infirmities, tarnished honor and seared consciences, I laid aside my investigation, I retained only typical details borrowed here and there, bits of scenery, of manners, and the general atmosphere in which the action of my drama was to take place.

However, by virtue of a weakness which I have already avowed, that craving for reality which besets me and compels me always to leave a certificate of genuineness at the foot of my most carefully disguised inventions, after originally installing my royal household on Rue de la Pompe in the small mansion of the Duke of Madrid, whom Christian of Illyria resembles in more ways

[1] Isabella, Queen of Spain from 1833 to 1868, when she was driven out of the country. In 1870, in Paris, she signed a formal abdication in favor of her son Alfonso XII., who succeeded in 1875, the brief reign of King Amadeus and the short-lived Republic having intervened. She is the grandmother of the present king Alfonso XIII. and the mother-in-law of the Queen-Regent, Maria-Christina. Isabella is still living in Paris.

than one, I transplanted it to Rue Herbillon, within a few steps of the great faubourg and its itinerant fairs, where I proposed to have Méraut show Frederika the common people at close quarters and teach her to fear them no more. As the King and Queen of Naples[1] lived for a long time on Rue Herbillon, it was commonly said that they were the royal personages whom I intended to depict; but I solemnly declare that it is untrue, and that I have simply displayed a purely imaginary royal couple on a real stage.

Méraut, however, is taken from life, he is a real personage, to his waist at all events, and the way in which I was led to put him into my book deserves to be told. Being firmly determined not to write a mere pamphlet but to make one of my characters plead the cause of legitimacy and divine right, I tried to kindle my own enthusiasm in their behalf, to resuscitate the convictions of my youth, by reading Bonald, Joseph de Maistre, Blanc Saint-Bonnet, those whom d'Aurevilly calls the "prophets of the past." One day, in an old copy of the *Restauration Française*,[2] which

[1] Presumably Francis II., who succeeded his father Ferdinand (Bomba) as King of the Two Sicilies in 1859. In 1860 his territory was overrun by Garibaldi's troops and he took refuge in Gaeta, whence he was finally forced to retire in February 1861. His protest against the assumption of the title of King of Italy by Victor Emmanuel was dated at Rome in April, 1861. After devoting his energies for some time to fomenting brigandage and insurrection in his former realm, he at last bowed to the inevitable and retired to Paris.

[2] Written by Blanc Saint-Bonnet.

I purchased on the quays, I discovered at the foot of a presentation letter from the author, bound between two pages, this postscript, which I copy word for word: "If you happen to need a well-informed, eloquent young man, apply, *using my name*, to M. Thérion, 18 Rue de Tournon, Hôtel du Luxembourg."

And suddenly I saw once more that tall youth with the flashing black eyes, whom I used to meet soon after my arrival in Paris, always with books under his arm, coming out of a book-stall or burying his nose in old books in front of the shops in the Odéon; a long, dishevelled devil, with a peculiar trick, constantly repeated like the spasms of the St. Vitus dance, of adjusting his spectacles on a flat, open, sensual nose, instinct with love of life. Eloquent beyond question, and learned, and bohemian! All the fruit stalls in the quarter have heard him declare his monarchical opinions, and, with an abundance of gesture and an earnest, persuasive voice, hold the attention of an auditory drowned in tobacco smoke. Ah! if I had had him before me, living, what an impulse he would have given to my book! He would have breathed into it his fire, his sturdy loyalism; and what a mine of information concerning his experience at the Austrian court, whither he went as tutor to some of the young princes, and whence he returned disillusioned, his dream shattered! But this Constant Thérion had disappeared some years before, starved to death, and unluckily I had met him rather than

known him; my eyes had not begun to see clearly in those days, I was too young, more intent upon living than observing. Thereupon, in order to make up for the details concerning him which I lacked, it occurred to me to make him a countryman of my own, from Nîmes, from that hard-working *bourgade* from which all my father's workmen came; to place in his bedroom that red seal, *Fides, Spes,* which I had seen in the house of my own parents, in the room where we used to sing *Vive Henri V.!*[1] the refrain that came on with the dessert at all our family merry-makings; to surround him with those royalist traditions amid which I had grown up and to which I had clung until I reached the age of the open mind and the enfranchised thought. By thus bringing in my own South, my childish memories, I brought the book nearer to me. Méraut — Thérion if you prefer — being conceived, how could he be introduced into the royal household? As the tutor of a prince; hence Zara. And just at that moment, a catastrophe that happened in a friend's family, a child struck in the eye by a bullet from a parlor rifle, suggested the idea of the poor king-maker destroying his own work.

The visions of sleep bear the impress of the realities of life. At a time when I used to dream a great deal, I had adopted the habit of jotting

[1] The son of the Duc de Berri and grandson of Charles X., commonly known as the Comte de Chambord, was always "King Henri V." to the adherents of the elder branch of the Bourbons after the abdication of Charles X. in 1830. He was born in 1820 and died in 1883.

down my dreams in the morning, accompanying them with explanatory notes: "Did this thing or that the night before — said such and such a thing — met So-and-so." And I might place notes of this sort on the margin of *Kings in Exile.* After the chapter on the gingerbread fair, where Méraut carries the little king, who is so frightened, on his shoulders, I might write: "Yesterday, walked through Rue Herbillon. — Also through the woods at Saint-Mandé with one of my children. — Easter Sunday. — Holiday uproar. — We finally got into the thick of the restless, surging crowd. — The boy was frightened. — I took him on my back to leave the scene of the fair." — In another place, at the end of the chapter on the heroic ball at the Rosen palace, I might note the fact that, one day, at the Exposition of 1878, as I sat listening to the tzigani music and sipping Tokay, the clash of the cymbals reminded me of a Polish ball at the Countess Chodsko's, a farewell ball, given in honor of those young men of whom many were destined never to return. And then, when one is carrying a book in one's head, thinking only of it, what lucky chances, extraordinary coincidences, miraculous meetings, are certain to occur! I have mentioned Blanc Saint-Bonnet's little postscript. Another day there was the prosecution begun by the Duke of Madrid against Boët, his aide-de-camp, the pawned jewels, the Golden Fleece sold; then a sale on execution at Tattersall's, the Duke of Brunswick's state carriages

purchased by the Hippodrome; and again, at the Drouot establishment, the sale of two jewelled crowns belonging to Queen Isabella. And it was on the day I went to the "Hôtel" to attend this sale, that a *high-liver*, a superb idiot, putting his head between the shoulders of two Auvergnats, shouted to me in the crush: "Where do we *faire fête* to-night?" A foolish phrase, which I launched on its course, and which had the fortune of all foolish phrases. Another time I saw the funeral procession of the old King of Hanover pass the *Librairie Nouvelle*, the Prince of Wales at its head. A fine episode to describe, that funeral of an exiled king. Unfortunately I was embarrassed by the parallel episodes in my former books, Mora, Desirée, and the little king Madon-Ghezo. But all this tended to assure me that I was writing a book instinct with the spirit of my epoch, now drawing to its close.

I wrote *Kings in Exile* on Place des Vosges, at the end of a vast courtyard where tufts of green grass grew between the uneven pavements, in a small summer-house filled with the reflection of virgin vines, a neglected bit of the Hôtel de Richelieu. Within, old Louis XIII. wainscotings, gilding almost worn away, ceiling five metres from the floor; without, a cast-iron balcony eaten with rust at its base. That was just the framework I needed for that melancholy tale. In that enormous study I found anew every morning the creatures of my imagination, like human beings instinct with life, grouped about my table.

It was a pitiless, tyrannical task. I went out only in the morning, soon after dawn in winter, to take my boy to the Lycée Charlemagne through the muddy alleys of that corner of the Marais, and through Passage Eginhard, the *ghetto* where old Leemans' secondhand shop fermented, and where I used to meet on their way into the city little working-girls, well-groomed, hook-nosed Sephoras in germ, walking swiftly and laughing merrily. And from time to time an excursion in the city, in pursuit of information, or in search of a house — Tom Lewis's den or the Franciscan convent on Rue des Fourneaux.

Suddenly, in the very heart of the book, at the height of the effervescence of those painful hours which are the best hours of life, there was a sudden interruption, a snapping of the overworked machine. It began with brief naps, bird-like drowsiness, a trembling of the hand, a feeling of languor interrupting the written page, ominous and unconquerable. I had no choice but to halt in the middle of the day's march, to allow the fatigue to pass away. I relied upon the care of good Dr. Potain, upon the perfect repose of the country, to restore elasticity and strength to my relaxed nerves. In truth, after a month of Champrosay, of blissful revelling in the fresh odors of the forest of Sénart, I had an extraordinary sense of well-being, of exaltation. The springtime was advancing; my reawakened sap bubbled and fermented in my veins as in all nature's, and clothed once more with blossoms

the emotions of my twentieth year. Never shall I forget the forest path where, beneath the dense foliage of walnuts and green oaks, I wrote the balcony scene of my book. Then suddenly, without warning, I was startled by a violent hemorrhage, unattended by pain, which left my mouth full of the acrid taste of blood. I was really frightened; I thought that the end had come, that I must go and leave my work unfinished; and, in what I believed to be a final farewell, I had just strength enough to say to my wife, to the dear companion of my every hour, happy or miserable; "Finish my book!"

Perfect quiet, a few days in bed — what cruel days they were with that constant rumbling of the book in my head! — and the danger had passed. Everything can be put to some use. Turgénieff, a short time before his death, being compelled to undergo a painful operation, noted in his mind all the shades of suffering. He intended, he said, to describe it to us at one of the dinners of which he and I, Goncourt and Zola used to partake together in those days. In like manner I analyzed my sufferings, and turned to account the sensations of those moments of anguish in describing the death of Élysée Méraut.

Gently, little by little, I resumed my work. I carried it to the waters of Allevard, whither I was sent for treatment. There, in one of the public rooms, I met an old physician, a man of great originality and great learning, Doctor Roberty from Marseille, who suggested to me the

idea of the Bouchereau type and of the episode with which the book ends. For, sustained as I was by the brave creature who guided my still hesitating pen, I reached the end of the book at last. But I felt that something had broken within me; after that I could no longer treat my body like an old rag, deprive it of air and movement, prolong my vigils till morning in order to bring on the fever which inspires noble literary conceptions.

⁂

The novel appeared in the *Temps* newspaper, and was afterward published by Dentu. Press and public welcomed it kindly, even the Legitimist journals. Armand de Pontmartin said in the *Gazette de France:*

"I do not know whether Alphonse Daudet wrote his book as the result of a republican inspiration. But I am sure of this — and it sums up my impression after reading the book — that there is something noble, affecting, pathetic and encouraging in *Kings in Exile;* and the thing that atones for its brutalities, that rescues this novel from the trivial ugliness of realism, is the royalist sentiment. It is the energetic resistance of a few proud and lofty souls to that cataclysm in which the Bal Mabille, the green-room, the great Club, the great *Seize,* are gradually swallowing up dethroned royalties."

Amid the laudatory articles there was a savage attack by Vallès, who took Tom Lewis's establishment for an invention *à la* Ponson du Terrail. That proved to me what I already knew, that the

author of "The Street" knows nothing of Paris except the street, the street of the faubourgs, the capering crowds and the sidewalk; he has never entered the houses. Among other reproaches, he accused me of having been a traitor to Thérion, of having distorted his figure. I have already said that Méraut was not Thérion absolutely. As a counterpoise I quote a few lines from a letter which I received, with a portrait, immediately after the publication of my book:

"You must have been very fond of dear Élysée to give him the place of honor in *Kings in Exile.* No one who knew him will ever forget him. Thanks to you, Elysée Méraut will live as long as *Kings in Exile.* Your book will be henceforth to me and mine the book of a friend, a family book."

This letter is from Thérion's brother.

Then the excitement subsided. Paris went on to read other things; for my part I was satisfied to have written a book which my father, an ardent royalist, might have read without pain, and to have proved that words still came at my command and that I was not altogether played out, as my enemies had shown that they hoped.

Several dramatic authors, however, were desirous of writing a play based upon my work; I was hesitating about giving my consent, when an Italian wrote the play for a Roman theatre, without consulting me. That exploit turned the scale. But to whom should I intrust the play? Godinet was tempted, but the political flavor frightened

him. Coquelin, to whom I mentioned the matter, said that he had some one; if I would put the matter in his hands, he would tell me my collaborator's name later. I am very fond of Coquelin, I have perfect confidence in him and I consented. He read the play to me, act by act, as it was constructed; I found it a strong production, written in flowing prose, clever and well dialogued. Two words put in Élysée Méraut's mouth in the middle of the first act — he was made to say that Hezeta had "printed him" — put me on the track of the author. — "It is some one from Lemerre's." — It is well known that the publishing-house on Passage Choiseul places the printer's name at the end of the beautiful poems it publishes. And that is how I discovered my collaborator, Paul Delair, a writer of great talent, sometimes a little confused, but with flashes of true grandeur; a poet.

The play was satisfactory to me, except that the last act seemed to me a little harsh. The scene was laid in the garret on Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, at the death-bed of Élysée Méraut. At the end King Christian partly opened the door: "Is Mademoiselle Clémence in?" — In my little salon on Avenue de l'Observatoire, when Coquelin read us Delair's work, all who were present received the same impression that I did. Gambetta had come that evening, also Edmond de Goncourt, Zola, Banville, Doctor Charcot, Ernest Daudet, Édouard Drumont and Henry Céard. It was the unanimous opinion that the last act must

be changed, that it was too dangerous. Delair listened to us and modified, toned down the last act; labor thrown away! we were doomed before we were acted. I was convinced of it at the dress rehearsal. The play had been well-mounted, beyond question; the best talent of the Vaudeville interpreted it, the management had spared no pains; and yet I have never seen an audience so attentive and so hostile as that of the first night. At the next and all following performances they hissed;—see the *Gaulois* of that time. Every evening the clubs sent delegates to make a disturbance. Whole scenes, very beautiful, very touching scenes, were acted amid a terrible uproar in which it was impossible to hear a single word. Passages like that in which a Bourbon is described as running after an omnibus were marked beforehand. Ah! if they had known from whom I had that detail! And Dieudonné's superb *entrée*, drunkenness in a black coat during the heroic chorus from Pugno's march! It came to be the fashion to go there and create a disturbance, as at the Salle Taitbout. And then, behind that artificial wrath of dandydom, there was a general feeling of indifference on the part of the audience. The Parisian public, much less monarchical in its feelings than I, remained profoundly insensible to the sufferings of royal personages; they were too entirely outside its usual line of thought, as far removed from its pity as the sufferers by fire at Chicago and by the floods on the Mississippi.

Aside from a few *feuilletons* from the pen of independent critics like Geoffroy and Durranc, criticism followed the public; that is its rôle to-day; and the play had the advantage of universal denunciation. Although Paul Delair's name alone appeared on the advertisement, I was singled out as the target for calumnies and abuse of all sorts for several weeks. I treated those insults as they deserved to be treated. By virtue of the multiplicity of newspapers and the din of reporters, the voice of Paris has become a deafening mountain echo, which increases tenfold the hum of conversations, repeats everything without end, and stifles, by increasing its volume, the just tone of blame and praise. I did, however, note down one of these calumnies which I propose to discuss. It was alleged that my book was intended as a bit of flattery for the government, and that, after beginning it in a tone favorable to royalty, during the "Sixteenth May," I had turned about after the fall of the marshal and fawned upon the triumphant republic. They who said that, who believed that a work once constructed can be thus turned to right or left by caprice, by self-interest — they never composed a book, or they would at least have reflected, have asked themselves for what purpose I could have done that of which they accused me. I stand in need of nothing, of nobody, I live in my own house, I desire neither office, nor preferment, nor distinction. Then, why?

As for the charge that my book was a pamphlet

in the interest of a party, that is no truer than the other. Both book and play tell less than the truth. I have given royalty a not ignoble part; whose is the fault that that part is no nobler? Monarchy posed for me; as always, I wrote after nature. Moreover, I am not the first to call attention to the deterioration of royal minds in exile. In the admirable *Mémoires d' Outre-Tombe*, which I had upon my table all the time I was at work, Chateaubriand describes much more brutally than I the imbecility, the blindness of the court of Charles X. in England.

"From her sofa Madame looked through her window at what was going on out-of-doors; she mentioned the equestrians, male and female, by name. Two small horses appeared, with two jockeys dressed in the Scotch fashion. Madame paused in her work, looked a long while and said: 'It is Madame ——' (I forget the name), 'going to the mountain with her children.'— Marie-Thérèse, in the character of an inquisitive woman, familiar with the habits of the neighborhood, the princess of thrones and scaffolds descended from her exalted station to the level of other women, interested me strangely. I watched her with a sort of philosophical emotion."

And, a few pages farther on:—

"I went to pay my court to the Dauphin; our conversation was very brief:

"'How does Monseigneur find himself at Butscherad?'

"'Growing old.'

"'Like everybody else, Monseigneur.'

"'How is your wife?'

"'She has the toothache, Monseigneur.'
"'Inflammation?'
"'No, Monseigneur, old age.'
"'Do you dine with the king? We shall meet again.'
"And we parted."

And what an indictment is contained in M. Fourneron's book, *History of the Émigrés during the French Revolution!* The bearing of the Comte d'Artois[1] and the Comte de Provence[2] in exile, while their brother was a prisoner in the Temple and when he was sent to the scaffold—the rivalry between mistresses, Madame de Polastron and Madame de Balbi!

My Gravosa expedition seemed to some persons incredible, monstrous, pure invention. But read the story of Quiberon, the adventures of those ill-starred Vendean soldiers who had been promised a prince of the blood to march at their head, waiting, longing for the landing of the Comte d'Artois, who remained in the offing, afraid to land, and who wrote to d'Harcourt: "We could see none but republican troops on shore." They who pointed them out to him, Baron de Roll and his friends, invented every day new pretexts for postponing the landing. In vain did the heroic Rivière, Comtes d'Autichamp, de Vauban and de la Beraudière insist. "I don't propose to fight Chouan-fashion," the king replied. —And then there is the story of Frotté and his mission dropping like a bombshell amid the whist

[1] Afterwards Charles X. [2] Afterwards Louis XVIII.

parties at Holyrood. He came to submit his plan for a landing. He was received in presence of Couzié, the Bishop of Arras, Baron de Roll, Comtes de Vaudreuil and de Puységur, and the banker du Theil.

"I beg your pardon," said Roll with his German accent, "I am captain of the guards and therefore responsible to the king for Monsieur's safety. Is there sufficient assurance of success for Monsieur to venture? — No, most assuredly not! " — "So you yourself, Monsieur de Frotté," interposed the prince, "agree that the plan is impracticable?"

Frotté takes his leave, he returns alone to his Norman gentlemen, armed with one of those letters filled with pompous phrases, of which the Comte d'Artois was very lavish. "I rely upon Comte Louis de Frotté to express to you all the sentiments which fill my heart to overflowing. Providence, doubt it not, will smile upon your noble-hearted constancy. Until that so earnestly desired moment arrives when I shall be able to express my feelings in spoken words, believe me, Messieurs — "

That book was written by a royalist who could not find words in which to express his hatred of the Convention. Is there so harsh a page as this in *Kings in Exile?*

A READING AT EDMOND DE GONCOURT'S.[1]

EDMOND DE GONCOURT has invited a few intimate friends to meet at Auteuil this morning, proposing to read them his new novel before breakfast. In the study, with its pleasant smell of old books, and lighted, as it were, from floor to ceiling by the burnished gold of the bindings, I perceive, as I open the door, Émile Zola's sturdy frame, Ivan Turgénieff, colossal as a Northern god, and the slight black moustache and unruly hair of the excellent publisher Charpentier. Flaubert is missing; he broke his leg the other day, and at this moment lies helpless in an invalid's chair, making Normandie ring with terrible Carthaginian oaths.

Edmond de Goncourt, our host, seems to me about fifty years old. He is a Parisian, but of Lorraine parentage; he has the kindly dignity of a Lorrainer, combined with true Parisian delicacy. Gray hair, once very light, a genial high-bred air, a tall erect figure with the hunting-dog nose of a sporting country gentleman; and on his pale, strong face a smile that is always tinged with sadness, a glance which sometimes emits a flash as keen and sharp as an engraver's point.

[1] Written in 1877 for the *Novoë Vremya* of St. Petersburg.

What a world of will power in that glance, and what melancholy in that smile! And while we are laughing and talking, while de Goncourt is opening his table drawers and arranging his papers, interrupting himself to show us a curious pamphlet, a curio from some distant land, while we are taking our seats and making ready to listen, I am conscious of a thrill of deep emotion as my eyes rest upon the broad, long writing-table, the fraternal table, made for two, at which Death took his seat one day, as a third, carrying away the younger of the brothers and brutally cutting short that unique collaboration.[1]

The survivor retains an extraordinary affection for his deceased brother. Despite his innate reserve, which is intensified by a proud and persistent taciturnity, he betrays in speaking of him an exquisite, almost feminine delicacy of feeling. One is conscious of a boundless grief beneath it, of something more than affection. "He was our mother's favorite!" he says sometimes; without regret, without bitterness, as if it seemed to him just and natural that such a brother should always be the favorite.

In truth such a perfect community of existence has never been seen. In the eddying whirl of modern life brothers part before they reach the age of twenty. One travels, the other marries; one is an artist, the other a soldier; and when, from time to time, chance brings them together beneath the family lamp, after years of absence,

[1] Jules de Goncourt died June 20, 1870.

it requires a sort of effort for them not to treat each other as strangers. Even when they live side by side, what chasms may be opened between those two minds and those two hearts by diversity of ambitions and aspirations! Pierre Corneille may live in the same house with Thomas, but the former writes the *Cid* and *Cinna*, while the latter laboriously versifies the *Comte d'Essex* and *Ariane*, and their literary fraternity hardly extends beyond passing a few paltry rhymes back and forth from floor to floor, through a small peep-hole in the ceiling.

With the two de Goncourts it was by no means a matter of borrowed rhymes or phrases. Before death parted them they had always thought together, and you will not find a fragment of prose twenty lines in length which does not bear their double mark and is not signed by their two names inseparably united. A small fortune — twelve to fifteen thousand francs a year for both — assured them leisure and independence. Nevertheless they had marked out a life for themselves within narrow limits, a life of literary delights and hard work. From time to time a long journey *à la* Gérard de Nerval through Paris and its books, always by the narrow by-paths, for those refined tourists had a sincere horror of everything that resembles the beaten highway, with its long monotonous ribbon of dusty road, its sign-posts, its telegraph wires, and its double row of loose stones raked into piles. They went thus, arm-in-arm, ransacking books and life, noting details

of manners, the unknown nook, the rare pamphlet, and plucking each new flower with the same joyful interest, whether it grew amid the ruins of history or between the greasy pavements of the Paris of the faubourgs. Then, when they had returned to the little house at Auteuil, like herborists or naturalists, fatigued and joyous together, they would pour out the double harvest on the great table, observations, novel images, redolent of nature and green fields, metaphors as full of life as flowers, brilliant as exotic butterflies, and there was neither rest nor truce until everything was arranged and classified.

Of the two collections they made a single one; each wrote his page on his side of the table; then they compared the two pages, to complete them each by the other and to blend them. And it sometimes happened, by a unique phenomenon of assimilation in work and parallelism of thought, that the charming and touching surprise awaited them of finding that, save for some detail forgotten by one and noted by the other, the two pages, written separately but *lived* together, strikingly resembled each other.

Why is it that, side by side with many too-easily-won triumphs, such a love of art, such assiduous work, with so many priceless gifts as observers and writers, brought to the brothers de Goncourt only a tardy recompense, awarded after much haggling as it were? Judging from the appearance of things only, that would seem incomprehensible. But no! those two Lorrainers,

so refined and fashionable, so in love with aristocracy, were downright revolutionists in art; and the French public, always virtuous in some direction, does not care for revolutions except in politics. By their passionate pursuit of the contemporary document, by their interest in autographs and engravings, the brothers de Goncourt have inaugurated a new method in history, properly so-called, and in art. If they had taken up some speciality — in France we always pardon specialities sooner or later — if they had confined themselves to history for instance, it may be that, notwithstanding their originality, they would have been accepted, and perhaps we should have seen those mad fellows seated beneath the dusty dome of the Institute, beside the Champagnys and the Noailles. But no! applying as they did to the novel the same care in obtaining exact information, the same scrupulous regard for reality, are they not, since leaders of schools are the fashion, the leaders of a school comprising a whole generation of young novelists?

Historians who write novels! That would be all very well if they were historical novels; but such novels as no one ever saw before, novels which are neither Balzac remoulded nor George Sand diluted, novels consisting wholly of tableaux — there you have the collectors of engravings! — with a plot barely suggested and great gaps between the chapters, genuine breakneck ditches for the imagination of the honest bourgeois reader. Add to this an entirely novel

style, abounding in the unexpected; a style from which all stereotyped forms are banished, and which, by a calculated originality of construction and of image, forbids the mind to entertain a commonplace thought; and disconcerting flashes of audacity, the constant separation of words that are accustomed to go together like working oxen, the necessity of choosing, the horror of saying everything, and do you wonder that the de Goncourts did not immediately arouse the admiration of the multitude?

The esteem of men of letters, the admiration which is equivalent to consecration, ennobling friendships — these were the fruits which MM. de Goncourt reaped at once. The great Michelet expressed a wish to know the young men; and the homage with which he honored them as historians, Sainte-Beuve rendered them as novelists. Sympathy with their work gradually widened. For a whole year the painters' set swore by *Manette Salomon*, that admirable collection of pen pictures. *Germinie Lacerteux* caused more excitement, almost a scandal. And refined Paris was dumfounded by that horrifying disclosure of the abysses of vice in the populous quarters. People marvelled at the ball at the "Boule-Noire," with its irritating orchestra and its compound odor of hair-oil, gas, pipe smoke, and wine served in salad-bowls.

They were charmed with those Parisian landscapes, so often imitated since, but then in the very flower of novelty, the outer boulevards, the

Buttes Montmartre, the promenade around the fortifications, and the dusty tracts of the outlying districts, where the soil is all ground earthenware and oyster shells. The picture of this special side of Parisian life, so near us and yet so far away, boldly conceived and vigorously painted, gave to every one who could read a vivid impression of originality.

But still the great public held aloof.

Theatrical writers pilfered more or less from the de Goncourts' books, which is a good sign for a novelist. But these ingenious adaptations brought profit and glory only to the adapter. Outside of an extremely restricted circle the name of the de Goncourts remained almost unknown after so many powerful and charming books.

They needed an opportunity; it came at last. Chance seemed inclined to smile. A manager with literary tastes, M. Édouard Thierry, accepted their *Henriette Maréchal.* Three long acts at the Comédie-Française! It was a genuine bargain. At last they were about to lay hands upon that distraught, indifferent public, more elusive than Galatea; and when they actually had it in their grasp, it would have no choice but to listen and pass judgment, willy-nilly. You cannot make people read a book, though it be a masterpiece, but a play is always heard.

But no, once more the public did not hear. The fates were unkind; an accident, a foolish accident, was all that was needed. It was currently reported that the play had been forced on

the management by a princess of the imperial family; the youth of the Latin Quarter took fire, a cabal was organized, and political feeling, which was everywhere held in check and found a vent as best it could, vented itself this time on the backs of two inoffensive artists. *Henriette Maréchal* was played five times and no one was able to hear one single word of it.[1]

I can still recall the uproar in the hall, and particularly the scene in the artists' green-room on the first night. Not an *habitué!* Not an actor! Everybody had fled before the breath of disaster. And in that waxed and gleaming desert, beneath the lofty, solemn ceiling and the eyes of the great portraits, two young men standing alone by the fireplace and asking each other: "What is the meaning of all this ill-feeling? What have they against us?"—dignified and proud, but with hearts oppressed none the less by the brutality of the insult. The elder, pale as death, was encouraging the younger, a fair-haired youth with a flushed and nervous face, whom I saw but that one time.

And yet their drama was a strong, bold, original piece of work. Some years later the same people who had hissed it applauded frantically *Héloïse Paranquet* and the *Supplice d'une Femme*, plays swift in action, going straight to the catastrophe like an express train; plays of which *Henriette Maréchal* may well be considered the forerunner. And was not that first act at the

[1] *Henriette Maréchal* was produced in December, 1865.

Bal de l'Opéra, that crowd, those masks chaffing and shouting, pursuing and reviling each other, that persistent adherence to reality and life, as ironical and as true to nature as a caricature by Gavarni — was it not, in fact, *naturalism* on the stage, fifteen years before the word naturalism was invented?

Henriette Maréchal has foundered — very good, we must go to work once more. And behold the two brothers seated anew before the great table in their hermitage at Auteuil. First of all, they put their hands to a study of art, the monograph on the life and work of Gavarni whom they had known and loved, as full of life as a novel, as accurate and full of facts as a museum catalogue. And next to that, the most complete, incontestably the finest, but also the most disdainful and the most arrogantly personal of their books: *Madame Gervisais.*

No plot, the simple story of a woman's soul, the journeyings, through a series of admirable descriptions, of an intellect vanquished by the nerves, which started on its travels in full control of itself and ended by going to Rome and there succumbing, under the enervating influence of the climate, to the shadow of ruined monuments, to the indefinable mystic and benumbing exhalation from the walls of churches, amid the odor of incense of Catholic ceremonial. It was superb, its failure was complete. Not an article upon it, and hardly three hundred copies sold.

That was the last stroke. The younger brother,

an excitable, almost feminine nature, — subject, moreover, for some time past, to attacks of a nervous malady, and sustained solely by the fever of hard work and hope — could not endure the shock. As a very thin glass placed on the resonant cover of a piano shivers and breaks at a too brutal discord, so something broke in him. He languished some time and died. The artist is not a recluse. Try as one may to take his place above and outside of the multitude, it is for the multitude that one always writes, when all is said.

And then you love those books of yours, the fruit of your entrails, made of your blood and your flesh; how can you divest yourself of your interest in them? Whatever strikes them strikes you, and the artist equipped with the most impregnable armor bleeds at a distance — as if by means of some mysterious sorcery — from the wounds inflicted on his works. We play for the select few, but number is what we crave; we scorn success, and failure kills us.

Can you imagine the despair of the survivor, of that brother left alone, dead himself, as it were, stricken in half of his being? At any other moment it is probable that he would not have resisted. But the war was then in progress. The siege came in due time, and then the commune.

The roar of the cannon in that suburban district, bombarded on all sides, the hissing of the shells, the universal crumbling and ruin, the for-

eign war, the civil war, the massacre amid the conflagration, that Niagara-like roar which hovered over Paris for six months, preventing one from hearing, benumbing even the thought, made his grief less sensible to him. And when it was all over, when the black fog was dissipated and people began to think again, his sadness enveloped him anew, bereft of his mate, with a great void at his heart, amazed to find that he was still alive, yet accustomed to living.

Edmond de Goncourt had not the courage to leave the little fraternal house, so full of memories of him he mourned. He remained there, solitary and sad, and unconnected with life save by the quasi-instinctive labor of caring for his collections and his garden; he had sworn never to write again; the books, the table made him shudder.

One fine day — he had no idea how it came about — he found himself seated, pen in hand, in his accustomed place. At first it was hard, and more than once, turning as in the old days to ask his brother for a word, a note, he rose and left the room, dismayed to find the chair empty. But an entirely novel and unexpected experience, success, brought him back to his work, seated him in the old place once more. Since *Madame Gervisais* time had gone on and the public as well.

A movement had taken place in literature in the direction of accurate observation, expressed in curious and concise language. Readers gradu-

ally became accustomed to these novelties which had terrified them so at first, and the real initiators of this renascent movement, the Goncourts, became fashionable. All their books were reprinted. "If only my brother were here!" said Edmond, with a sort of sorrowful joy. Then it was that he ventured to write the novel, *La Fille Élisa*, which he and his brother had contemplated.

It was not precisely writing alone, it was a sort of spinning out of their joint work, a posthumous collaboration. The book was successful and had a large sale. A triumph full of sad pleasure in a renewal of pain, and more than ever the inevitable: "Ah! if only he were here!"

But the ice was broken, the unconsoled brother awoke, a man of letters once more; and as Art is always connected by an invisible thread with life, the first book which he wrote alone was the story of that twofold existence, of that collaboration tragically interrupted, of his despair as of one dead in life, and of his sorrowful resurrection. The book is called *Les Frères Zemganno.*

We listened, deeply moved, enchanted, with a choking sensation in our throats, looking out through the windows at the convolvuli and the rare shrubs with gleaming, polished leaves in the little garden, still green notwithstanding the season. The thaw was beginning, causing star-shaped cracks in the ice on the pond, and patches of moisture on the rock-work, while a late winter's sun spread a smile over the snow. That smile, that sunshine ascended and invaded the house.

"Really? Do you like it? Are you satisfied?" said Edmond de Goncourt, wonderfully cheered by our enthusiasm; and the miniature of the dead brother, in its little oval frame in front of the mirror, seemed also to be lighted up by a gleam of long-delayed glory.

ACTORS AND ACTRESSES. — DÉJAZET.[1]

WHEN I saw Déjazet on the stage, a long, long while ago, she was nearer seventy than sixty; and despite all her art, all her charm, the silks and satins, scant as they were, fell in folds about her emaciated figure, the powder on her hair seemed in very truth the snow of age, and the ribbons of her costumes fluttered sadly with all her movements, which, by affecting to be frisky and agile, emphasized the more strongly the stiff-jointedness of advancing years and sluggish blood. One evening, however, the actress seemed to me altogether charming. It was not on the stage, but at Villemessant's, at Seine-Port. We were taking our coffee in the salon, with the windows open upon a magnificent park and a lovely summer's night. Suddenly a little figure appeared on the threshold, in a moonbeam, and a shrill voice asked: "May I come in?" It was Mademoiselle

[1] Pauline Virginie Déjazet, born in Paris in 1797 and died there in 1875. Her first appearance on the stage took place at the age of five and her last in October, 1875, shortly before her death. She is said to have won some of her most brilliant triumphs in male parts. As late as 1859 and 1860 she created important rôles in new plays and her acting was instrumental in bringing Sardou into prominence as a dramatic writer. A critic said of her: "Déjazet is champagne in petticoats, she is indecency exalted to an art, she is the Gauloise of quality."

Déjazet. She had come to make a neighborly call, her country-house being close by, and to pass the evening with us. Receiving an enthusiastic welcome, she sat down with a reserved, almost timid manner. We asked her to sing something. Faure the singer took his place at the piano to accompany her; but the instrument embarrassed her. Even the sweetest notes, mingled with her voice, would have prevented our hearing her. So she sang without accompaniment; standing in the centre of the salon, while the rare candles flickered in the summer breeze, dressed in a simple white muslin gown which made her seem as young as a young girl or as old as a grandmother, she began in a trembling voice, of small volume but very distinct, which sounded like a mysterious violin in the silence of the park and the darkness: "*Enfants, c'est moi qui suis Lisette.*"

I always see her so, when I think of her.

LESUEUR.[1]

LESUEUR in the beginning lacked many things which he required in order to earn the name of a great actor. His voice was low and indistinct, of an unpleasant quality which became rough and rasping when it aimed at resonance. Lack of memory tormented him also and led him constantly to the prompter's box. And finally, being of slender frame and thin, almost undersized, he lacked that dignified bearing which, in pathetic passages, dominates and occupies the whole stage. Not only did Lesueur triumph over all these defects, but he justified Regnier's theory that an actor should be obliged to contend with some physical disadvantages. The fine shades of meaning which his voice failed to express were expressed in his eloquent eyes, in the details of his acting; and, if portions of his part escaped him, there never were any serious mistakes in his performance, because he was always alive to the situa-

[1] François-Louis Lesueur's successful début in the *Gamin de Paris* and the *Aumônier du Régiment* led to a permanent engagement at Montparnasse. This was in 1822 and was the beginning of a long and successful career, during twenty years of which — 1848 to 1868 — he acted at the Gymnase. His stage name was Francisque de Saint-Marcel. He died in 1876 and created some of his best rôles as late as 1869.

tion and possessed what so many actors lack, the art of listening. But how did he succeed in overcoming his deficiency of stature? Certain it is that in certain plays, *Don Quixote* for instance, he appeared to be very tall and filled the stage with the amplitude of his gestures. If I may venture to make the comparison, there was something of Frédérick in him; the same versatility in assuming all the costumes of the human comedy, the short jacket of a studio fag, the sham purple of the king in a fairy extravaganza, the black coat of society — all of which he wore with perfect ease and equal distinction. The two men also had in common an exuberant fancy which gave to their creations an element of intensity, stamped their parts with an ineffaceable imprint and made it difficult for others to assume them after them. Ask Got, who is himself a perfect artist, whether he found it difficult to make his own the character of Père Poirier, created forty years ago by the actor at the Gymnase. When Lesueur acted in a play, the author could feel confident that, even in case of disaster, his whole effort would not be wasted, but that one part would certainly survive the shipwreck, the part assigned to Lesueur. Who would remember Édouard Plouvier's *Fous* to-day, were it not for his superb acting as the absinthe-drinker? How fine he was, sitting before his glass, with moist, trembling lip, holding high the carafe which shook in his hand, and pouring drop by drop the green poison, the effects of which we followed on his stupefied, cadaverous

mask! First there would be a puff of animation, a convulsion of life in that skeleton, congealed and dried up by alcohol; a little blood would rise to his cheeks, his eyes would flash; but in a moment his glance would become glassy and dull once more, the muscles of the lips would relax and the corners droop. He was a marvellous mimic, he was familiar with every detail of construction and with all the concealed wires of the poor human marionette, and handled them with such dexterity and precision! When he wept, everything about him sobbed, his hands, his shoulders. Do you remember how, in the *Chapeau d'un Horloger*, he folded and unfolded his legs, which flew about and multiplied as if he had ten, twenty, thirty pairs of legs: a gyroscopic vision? And what a poem his glance was, when he woke, in the *Partie de Piquet!* Ah! Lesueur! Lesueur!

FÉLIX.

A STRANGE figure, that Félix! As I wrote his name he appeared before me, a typical coxcomb and dolt, with the wide-open eyes, the low, square, obstinate forehead, always wrinkled with an effort to understand; the best of men, but as vain and foolish as a turkey-cock! One must have worked with him on the stage to realize what the man was. In the first place, immediately after the reading of a play in the green-room, Félix would go to the manager to return the part which had just been assigned to him, and which did not suit him. All the other parts in the work, except that, seemed to him excellent! He would have found it very hard to say why, I promise you. No, it was a mania, a craving to make one go on one's knees to him, to lure authors to his fourth floor apartment on Rue Geoffroy-Marie, to that comfortable, scrupulously neat little provincial interior, which one might have taken for a canon's or arch-priest's quarters, except for the innumerable portraits, medallions and photographs, reminding the artist of each of his creations. One must needs take a seat, accept a glass of "something sweet," and try to overcome that exasperating coquetry by dint of eloquence,

compliments and blandishments. At this first call Félix did not bind himself, he made no promises. He would see, he would reflect. Sometimes, when he was very anxious to have the part, he would say in a careless, indifferent tone: "Leave the play with me. I will read it again." And God only knows how much of it he understood, poor man! He would keep the manuscript a week, two weeks, and never refer to it; at the theatre one would hear whispers: "He will act — he won't act." And then, when you were tired of waiting, of having everything blocked by the caprice of a single man, and were making up your mind to tell the great actor to go to the devil, he would come to the rehearsal, affable and smiling, knowing his lines perfectly, and striking fire from the boards simply by putting his foot on them. But you had not seen the last of his caprices even then, and until the very day of the performance you must be prepared for terrible trials. On that day, to be sure, the incomparable energy of that strange artist, who became transformed in the glare of the footlights, his unconscious effects, always unerring, always understood, his irresistible power over the public, paid you handsomely for all your misery.

MADAME ARNOULD-PLESSY.[1]

DID you ever see her in *Henriette Maréchal?* Do you remember her in front of her mirror, gazing long and despairingly at that silent and pitiless confidant, and saying, in a heart-rending tone: "Ah! I show my age to-day?" Those who have heard that will never be able to forget it. It was so intense, so human! The actress made those five words, uttered slowly, falling from her lips at intervals like the notes of a funeral knell, express so many things: regret for vanished youth, the heartbroken agony of the woman who feels that her reign is ended, and that, if she does not abdicate of her own free will, old age will come forthwith and enforce her abdication by leaving the marks of its claws on her face. A horrible moment for the strongest, the most virtuous woman! It is like a sudden exile, a change of climate and the shock of an icy atmosphere sud-

[1] Madame Arnould Plessy was born in 1819. In 1834 she appeared in La Harpe's *Mélanie*, and in the same year made her début at the Français. She was an incomparable actress of light comedy of the Marivaux type, but was judged by the critics to be hardly "up" to Molière, although she acted in some of his plays. Of her it was said: "No actress since Mlle. Mars, whose traditions she inherited, has played the rôles of *amoureuse* and *grande coquette* with such consummate art." She retired from the stage in 1876.

denly succeeding the warm and balmy air, full of flattering murmurs and passionate adulation, which surrounds the beauty of woman in the bloom of life. For the actress the wrench is even more cruel. In her case coquetry is intensified and inflamed by a thirst for fame. So that most actresses are never willing to quit, they lack the courage to stand in front of their mirrors and say to themselves: "I show my age to-day." They are truly to be pitied. In vain do they struggle, cling desperately to the faded remnants of the fallen wreath; they see the public holding aloof, admiration replaced by indulgence, then by pity, and, what is more heart-rending than all, by indifference.

Thanks to her intellect, thanks to her pride, the great and brave-hearted Arnould-Plessy did not await that distressing hour. Having some years of life still before her, she has preferred to disappear at the height of her renown, as the sun, at the close of our beautiful October days, plunges abruptly below the horizon, rather than prolong its luminous death-agony in a vague, gradual twilight. Her reputation will be the gainer; but we have lost the delightful evenings she might still have given us. With her, Marivaux has gone, and the charm of his marvellous art, of that ever-changing, kaleidoscopic dialogue which has all the capricious amplitude of a fan unfolded in the light. All those lovely heroines who are called after Shakespeare's princesses, and who have something of their ethereal refine-

ment, have retired into their books; we may summon them but they do not come. Vanished also are those pretty pranks of wit and language, those dialogues, a little affected, perhaps a little too highly-wrought, but so thoroughly French, of which de Musset has written so many; charming bits of badinage, with elbows surrounded with falling lace resting on the edge of work-tables, and all the smiling caprices of amorous idleness. That is all dead and gone now; there will be no more chatting, no more over-refined sentimentalism on the stage. It is a vanished tradition, since Arnould-Duplessy has retired. Moreover, not only was that excellent actress a studious, painstaking artist, a faithful interpreter of the traditions of French art, but she possessed an original, inquiring talent, whether she essayed great tragic creations, like Agrippine, which she acted with so much individuality, much more according to Suetonius than according to Racine, or created a rôle in modern life, a realistic rôle like Nany in Meilhac's drama, an ignorant peasant and passionate mother. I remember one scene especially where, in her struggles to express the multitude of confused sentiments which were jostling one another in her ambitious and jealous heart, Nany, uncouth, stammering, trying in vain to find words, exploded in a frantic fit of rage with herself, and exclaimed in a strangled voice, fiercely beating her breast: "Ah! peasant! peasant!" The actress said it in such a way that the whole audience shuddered. Observe that such

shrieks as that, outbursts of such exceeding naturalness, are not due to tradition, not to schooling, but to study, to observing and *feeling* life. And is it not a glorious triumph, a proof of marvellous creative power, that an unsuccessful drama like *Nany*, which was played hardly half a score of times, should remain forever present to the eyes and minds of those who saw it, because Madame Arnould-Plessy acted the principal part?

ADOLPHE DUPUIS.[1]

ADOLPHE DUPUIS is the son of Rose Dupuis, *sociétaire* of the Comédie-Française, who retired from the stage in 1835 and died only a few years ago. Despite a very real talent, and triumphs dearly won beside Mademoiselle Mars, the excellent woman looked with stern disfavor upon her former profession; and when, upon graduating from the Collège Chaptal, where he had taken only moderate rank, sitting on the same bench with Alexandre Dumas, *fils*, Dupuis spoke of becoming an actor, his mother remonstrated with all the force of her affection. But we know what a loving woman's "never" is worth, and she loved her tall son passionately. At the Conservatoire he succeeded little better than at Chaptal; not that he lacked intelligence by any means, on the contrary he had too much; but it was of the sort that the school does not recognize, that sharp, individual intelligence which argues in the ranks and insists upon knowing the reason for the order "head to the right," when it should be put to the left. The scholar discussed his teacher,

[1] Born in 1824, made his first appearance in 1845, and died in 1891.

Samson's, ideas in the midst of the lesson, rebelled against the fashion of preparing for the competition and dissecting the subject with the professor, instead of leaving a little initiative to the pupil; he demanded that the examination should consist in rendering some passage at sight, not something that had been learned, repeated again and again for ten months, and insisted that in the general plan of study more attention should be given to nature, to the detriment of tradition. Imagine whether old Samson was likely to jump at such subversive theories as these; but in spite of everything he had a sympathetic feeling for his former comrade's son, this cool-blooded young rebel, with the good-humored smile, and he recommended him for admission to the Comédie-Française, where he became the fifth or sixth young lover in the plays of the regular repertory. Dupuis did not remain there long. One day Fechter, who had the same assignment that he had and acted no more frequently, said to him under his breath in a corner of the green-room: "Suppose we quit? We are starving here." "Let's do it," said Dupuis, and away went our *jeunes premiers*, to London, to Berlin, singing *Je suis Lindor*, in every corner of Europe, poorly paid, imperfectly understood, applauded the wrong way, but acting, having employment, which beginners prefer to everything. Two years later, about 1850, we find our actor at the Gymnase, in the hands of Montigny, who was the first to realize what might be made of that handsome youth,

a little slow in action and a little soft, and who suppled him by persistent hard work in many and widely varying parts; dressed him as an old man, as a workman, as a *raisonneur*,[1] as a noble father, exercised all his powers of observation, finesse, sensibility and good-humor, and that admirably natural intonation in which he is unrivalled. After ten years there, and immediately after the great success of the *Demi-Monde*, which was in large measure due to him, Dupuis yielded to the temptation of an engagement in Russia; he remained there a long time, too long, and when he came back to us, after an absence of seventeen years, he had some difficulty in winning public favor anew. That is the fate of all those who come back from the Michel Theatre. We must believe that the diapason is not the same at St. Petersburg as with us; they must speak lower there, act more quietly, understand things that are only half said, and underline nothing, as in a salon, among people who know one another well and are not very hard to please. In that style of acting, good and bad qualities are blurred as it were, make less impression. We recognize our artists, to be sure, but the footlights seem to burn dimly; we see them indistinctly as through a gauze veil. On the evening the *Nabob* was produced, for instance, old Parisians recognized their Dupuis, with all the talent of the old days,

[1] In the old French comedies the *raisonneur* was the serious character, whose lines were argumentative and highly moral in tone.

with something more indeed, a largeness of interpretation, a Marseillais impetuosity of which that placid old fellow seemed to them incapable. On the day after that performance, it was for Jansoulet to say whether he would enter the Comédie-Française by the staircase of honor, with all the doors thrown open, and not again by the secret door of his early days; but Samson's former pupil has retained his taste for freedom, the independent instinct of his youth, and as the management of the establishment on Rue Richelieu felt that they ought not to comply with his demands, the Vaudeville has had the good fortune to retain its actor.

LAFONTAINE.[1]

HENRI THOMAS, called Lafontaine, was born at Bordeaux in the early days of the romantic Hegira. Bordeaux occupies a place by itself in the South of France. Anchored on the shores of the Atlantic, its bowsprit pointed toward the Indies, it is the Creole South, the South of the Isles, excitable beyond measure, combining with the fiery imagination, the vivacity of speech and feeling of the people across the Loire, an immoderate craving for excitement, for travel, for rapid flight. This Bordeaux plays an important part in our actor's life and genius. "We will make a priest of him!" said his mother, a typical mother of that country, Catholic to the point of frenzy; but the young Bordelais is no sooner installed at the seminary than he climbs the wall, exchanges his frock for a blouse, and begins Little Red Riding Hood's journey across country, following a zigzag capricious course, until the wolf, a wolf with the chapeau and yellow baldric of a gendarme, stops him and demands his papers. Passed from station to station, he reaches home at last, and is told that he must return to the seminary. "Never!"

[1] Born in 1826; his first appearance was at the Batignolles theatre, but his reputation really began in 1852 at the Gymnase.

"Then you may ship for the islands, good-for-nought!" There we have a typical outbreak of parental wrath in the South: "He won't be a curé. *Zou!* Then we'll make him a cabin-boy."

Three months of beans and salted meat, in the wind and wet of the sea, cured the young runaway of his taste for travelling, but did not give him a taste for the tonsure. On his return from Île Bourbon he tried twenty trades, was successively cabinet-maker, locksmith, secondhand dealer in innumerable things, slept on the floor, ate the bread of poverty, following his nose at the bidding of his youth and of the wild Bordelais instinct, with no definite aim, but with his eyes always open and with an artist's memory. Now he is at Paris, agent for a publisher, walking the streets, climbing stairs, dealing in literature and science, with his mind lined with titles and prospectuses, and dilating upon books which he has no time to read, but which leave a little phosphorus on his finger-tips none the less; persistent, insinuating, eloquent, irresistible, such a book-agent as the house of Lachâtre had never seen. And then one evening he drops into the Théâtre Porte-Saint-Martin, sees Frédérick, and feels that commotion at the heart which none but lovers and artists know. He drops books and reviews and goes to call on Sevestre, old Père Sevestre, the manager of the suburban theatres. "What can you do? Have you ever acted?" "Never, sir; but give me a part and you 'll see." In that superb Bordelais presumption, accompanied by

bright eyes, freedom of movement and a loud metallic voice, Sevestre at once detected a temperament adapted to the stage. That temperament is common in the South, with its verbose, gesticulatory nature, which displays everything on the outside, puts everything into words, thinks aloud, the words always going beyond the thought. The man of Tarascon and the man of the Porte-Saint-Martin resemble each other.

On that little stage on Rue de la Gaîté, where Mounet-Sully afterward made his début, Lafontaine served his apprenticeship; he acted at Sceaux, at Grenelle, travelled in the omnibus attached to the suburban theatres, play-book in hand, declaiming Bouchardy along the roads. He succeeded. The report of his success crossed the bridges and reached the boulevard, and, not long after, Henri Lafontaine made his appearance at the Porte-Saint-Martin, to act in *Kean* with Frédérick,[1] who at once became attached to him

[1] The name Frédérick in connection with the French stage always means Frédérick Lemaître (1800–1876), generally considered the greatest artist of the age after Talma. His range of parts was very great, from the lion in *Pyramus and Thisbe* to Kean and Ruy Blas. His first great success was in *Robert Macaire*, which he transformed completely from a serious to a comic work. It was played a hundred and fifty times in succession in the twenties. Kean is said to have been his happiest part. In the *Vieux Caporal* his acting was so wonderful that he made his audience weep without uttering a word.

A copy of *Ruy Blas* which had belonged to the great actor was sold in 1891. It bore the following inscription on the fly-leaf: "To Frédérick, so well named The Master (Lemaître). — VICTOR HUGO."

and taught him how to work. "Come, my boy," the master would say as they left the theatre. And he would take his pupil with him to his quarters on Boulevard du Temple, exhausted by five hours on the boards, his eyes heavy with sleep, his cheeks discolored with gas and paint. But sleep was not on the programme, far from it! Supper would be served and all the candles in the salon lighted. They would eat and drink hastily; then the master would suggest a subject, a dramatic situation to be rendered, and, stretching himself out in his easy-chair, with a decanter of wine by his side, he would say: "Now, go ahead!"

The excellent Lafontaine has often told me the story of one of these improvised scenes. "Now," said Frédérick, lolling on his couch, "you are a petty government clerk, married three years ago. This is your wife's birthday, and you worship her. In her absence you have prepared a bouquet for her, a surprise, a nice little supper like this. And suddenly, as you are laying the table, you discover a letter which proves to you that you are shamefully outraged. Try to make me weep with that. Off you go."

Lafontaine goes about his task in all earnestness, sets his table conscientiously, not slighting anything — for Frédérick would stand no trifling in the matter of accessories — places his bouquet in the middle of the table with little bursts of laughter, melting glances; then, quivering with impatience and joy, opens the drawer in which

the surprise is secreted, finds a letter, reads it mechanically and utters a terrible cry, in which he tries to express all the despair of his blasted happiness!

"Between ourselves, I was very well satisfied with my cry," honest Lafontaine would say to me, his face brightening at the memory of his misadventure. "I thought it was judicious, pathetic, sincere, I almost made myself weep when I uttered it. But no! no! Instead of the compliments I expected, I received a lusty kick at the root of the spine. I was not greatly disturbed by that, because I was used to my master's manners; but his criticism was what particularly impressed me. 'What! you animal, you love your wife better than anything else in the world, you believe in her blindly, blind—ly, and yet at the first reading of that paper you see, you comprehend, you believe all that it tells you! Is such a thing possible? Look you, go and sit down yonder and watch me distil my poison.'"

Thereupon he begins the scene himself, opens the drawer. "Ah! a letter!" He turns it over and over, runs his eye over it cursorily, without grasping its meaning, tosses it back in the drawer, and continues to lay his table. "Upon my word, that 's a strange thing, that letter!" He goes back to it once more, reads it more carefully, then shrugs his shoulders and throws it on the table. "Nonsense, it is n't true, it 's impossible. She 'll explain it all to me when she comes in." But how his

hands tremble as he finishes laying the table! And still his eyes are fixed on the letter. At last he feels that he cannot stand it, that he must read it again. This time he comprehends it, a sob comes to his throat, he stifles it; he falls upon a chair, gasping. It was a marvellous spectacle, it seems, to see the great actor's features become more and more distorted after each reading. One could feel the effects of the poison as his eyes absorbed it. And then, when he was once in the clutches of his own emotion, Frédérick paused no more but continued the scene. A convulsive tremor of his whole body, a sanguinary glance toward the door. His wife had come in. He let her walk to his side, without moving, then suddenly stood erect before her, a terrifying object, her letter in his hand: "Read!" But before she replied, divining from the terror on that woman's face that it was true, that the letter did not lie, he turned about twice or thrice like a beast drunk with rage, sought words but found none, and, still in love, even in his fury, feeling that he must let loose upon some object other than his wife the frantic longing to do murder with which his hands were itching, he seized the table and sent it whirling to the other end of the salon, with the lamp and dishes and everything upon it.

That kick anointed Lafontaine a great actor, was like a confirmation from below of his faith in his talent. But if he had had no other instruction than Frédérick's lessons, the Bordelais artist

would never have been able to regulate, to dam up his impulsive vagabond instincts. His South carried him forward, but it embarrassed him as well. He had its characteristic faculty of brilliant improvisation, but he also had its tendency to extravagance, its lack of moderation, all its sharp contrasts of light and shade. Well endowed as he was, his life might have been a failure, he might have turned out simply a sublime maniac, whom his twofold temperament as an actor and a Southerner had driven mad. Luckily Lafontaine entered the company at the Gymnase and had there, for ten years, an incomparable teacher. They who have seen old Montigny in his arm-chair at the front of the stage, surly and frowning, insisting upon ten, twenty repetitions of the same passage; crushing the most ill-tempered, the most rebellious, never satisfied, storming and stamping — they may boast that they have known a genuine theatrical manager. With him the artist's talent was disciplined. Upon his exuberant energy Montigny placed like a yoke the military high-collar of the *Fils de Famille*, the same *Fils de Famille* which Lafontaine reproduced some years ago at the Odéon; he buttoned up his Southern gesticulation in the broadcloth coat of the husband in *Diane de Lys*. The Bordelais reared and foamed at the mouth; but he came forth subdued, suppled, accomplished, and to-day when he speaks of his old master his eyes are always moist.

NOTES UPON PARIS. — THE NOUNOUS.[1]

THERE is nothing so pretty, on these first joyous days of sunshine, when the buds are beginning to peep forth, as the assemblage of babies and nurses at the Luxembourg or the Tuileries, between one and two o'clock in the afternoon.

In those sheltered nooks where they all gather by appointment, the nurses walk about in groups with flying ribbons, or sit in line on chairs, sheltering their charges beneath great parasols with pink or blue lining, which soften the glare; and while the chubby-cheeked little darling, sleeping in his transparent veil and the frothy lace of his little cap, inhales with his whole tiny being the invigorating breath of spring, Nounou, radiant and blooming, with a smile as of a woman just recovered from childbirth constantly on her lips, glances triumphantly about, tosses her head, laughs and chatters with her companions.

There are fifty or more of them, all in provincial costume, — a refined, transformed provincial costume, which gives to the solemnity of the royal garden a sort of staid, opéra-comique poesy. Superb head-dresses of many varieties; the brilliant silk handkerchiefs of Gascons and mulat-

[1] The name by which children call their nurses.

tresses, conventional Breton caps, the huge, light black butterfly of the women of Alsace, the aristocratic *hennin* of the maidens of Arles, the tall caps from the Caux country, pierced with holes like cathedral spires, and the long gold-headed pins of the women of Béarn planted in uncouth chignons.

The air is soft, the flower-beds breathe fragrance, an odor of resin and honey exhales from the chestnut buds. Yonder by the pond the military band attacks a waltz. Nounou becomes restless, Bébé cries, while the little soldier on sentry-go turns as red as his cockade before that long line of his countrywomen, who seem to him greatly improved.

These are the nurses made up for promenades and for show, costumed and transfigured by the pride of parents and by six months' residence in Paris. But to see the true *nounou*, to know her thoroughly, one must surprise her on her first arrival in the capital, at one of those strange establishments called intelligence-offices, where wet-nurses are dealt in for the benefit of Parisian babies famished for milk of some sort. Near the Jardin des Plantes, at the end of one of those quiet streets which have retained a provincial character in the very heart of Paris, with boarding-houses, tables d'hôte, little houses with little gardens, occupied by old scientists, small annuitants and hens; on the front of an old house with a huge porch there is a sign which bears this simple word in pink letters: NURSES.

Women in rags saunter about before the door, in listless groups, with children in their arms. You enter: a desk, a wicket with an iron grating, the copper-colored back of a ledger, people waiting on benches — the inevitable office, always the same, equally prim and cold at the Market and at the Morgue, whether the business in hand is shipping fruit or registering corpses. Here the traffic is in living flesh.

Being recognized as a well-to-do person, you are not required to wait on the bench but are ushered into the salon.

A flowered paper on the walls, floor painted red and waxed as in a convent parlor, and on either side of the fireplace, above two glass cylinders covered with artificial roses, gold-framed portraits in oil of Monsieur le Directeur and Madame la Directrice.

Monsieur is commonplace; the head of an ex-business manager or of a successful pedicure; Madame, who is inclined to obesity, smiles with her three chins in the smug contentment of an easily-managed business, with that indefinable suggestion of cruelty which the handling of a human flock imparts to the face and the glance. Sometimes she is an ambitious midwife; more frequently an ex-nurse blest with a genius for business.

One day, a long time ago, there came to an establishment of this sort, perhaps this very one, a poor country girl, to sell a year of her youth with her milk. She prowled about in front of

the door like the others, half-starved, her child in her arms; like the others she wore out her sack-cloth skirt on the stone bench.

To-day, times have changed; she is wealthy and famous. Her village, which saw her set forth on her travels in rags, speaks of her only with respect. She is a person of authority there, almost a providence.

The harvest has failed, the landlord is urgent. At night, in the chimney-corner, the man says as he holds out his broad palm to the blaze: "Look 'ee, Phrasie, your milk's good, money comes hard; how would you like to go nursing at Paris? It don't kill a body; and the mistress of the office, who comes from here and knows us well, would get you a good place right off."

She goes, then another. Gradually the habit becomes fixed, the love of lucre continuing that which poverty began. Now, whenever a child is born, its destiny is settled beforehand. It will remain in the province to suck the goat; and the mother's milk, sold at a good price, will help to buy a field, to round out a bit of pasture land.

Every celebrity in the nursing line, every manageress of an intelligence office devotes her special attention to the province from which she came. One has Auvergne, another Savoie, this one the Breton moors or the wooded hills of Morvan. It is to be observed that the market for *nounous* at Paris follows the fluctuations of country life. Nurses are rare when the crops are large, plentiful in times of famine; but whether it be a good

or bad year, they are almost impossible to find during the harvest and grape-picking, at the time when every one is at work in the fields.

To-day the intelligence office seems well supplied. To say nothing of the nurses we saw at the gate, dragging their wooden shoes along the sidewalk, here are twenty or thirty under the window, in a little garden transformed into a courtyard, dismal to look upon with its borders of trampled box, its extinct flower-beds, and children's clothes drying on a line stretched between a sickly fig-tree and a dead lilac. On all sides is a row of one-story huts, whose sordid bareness brings to one's mind the cabins of negro slaves or the convict's cell. In them the nurses live with their children, awaiting employment.

They lie on beds of cord, in an atmosphere musty with rustic lack of cleanliness, amid the constant uproar of the little brats lying in heaps, all of whom wake as soon as one cries, and begin to shriek in concert, with their mouths extended toward the meagre breasts. So that they prefer the fresh air of the little garden, where they wander from one corner to another all day long, with the jaded look of madwomen, sitting down to sew a little or to add one more piece to a skirt already patched a hundred times — a rag of a special color, earthy and gray, or else affecting those faded yellow tones or expiring blues which Parisian fashion borrows, as a refinement of elegance, from country poverty.

But Madame enters, with the conventional man-

ner and costume of the position, at once coquettish and serious; an avalanche of ribbons of the color of burning punch over a waist of jansenistical black — stern of glance and soft of speech.

"You wish a nurse? Seventy francs a month? Very good. We have an assortment at that price."

She gives an order; the door opens, the nurses appear in squads of eight or ten, tramp into the room and stand in line, humble of mien, their children in their arms, with a great noise of hobnailed wooden shoes, and crowding one another awkwardly like cattle. These are not satisfactory? Quick, ten more! And always the same downcast eyes, the same pitiful timidity, the same gaunt, sunburned cheeks, of the color of bark and dirt. Madame presents them one by one and shows them off.

"As healthy as your eye — a real milch-cow — look at the little one!" The little one is really a fine fellow, he always is. Two or three are kept in stock in the establishment to appear in the place of those who are too weak and sickly.

"How old is your milk, nurse?"

"Three months, M'sieu'."

Their milk is always three months old. Just look: the dress is thrown open and a long white stream gushes forth, rich with the vigorous life of the country. But be not deceived; that is the reserve breast, which the child never sucks. The other side is the one you should see, the one which remains in hiding, shamefaced and flabby.

Moreover, with a few days of absolute repose, a little milk always collects.

And Madame unpacks those poor frightened creatures, and exposes them to your gaze, with the authority of possession and the impudence of habit.

At last the selection is made, the nurse is engaged; we must settle with the office. The manageress goes behind her grating and makes up the account. First, a certain percentage for the house, then the nurse's arrears for board and lodging. What more? her travelling expenses. Is that all? No, there is the *meneuse*, who is to take the nurse's child back to the province.

A melancholy journey that! The *meneuse* waits until there are five or six nurslings to go, and carries them strapped into great baskets, with their heads protruding like hens. Not a few of them die in this dragging about through frigid waiting-rooms, on the hard seats of third-class railway carriages, with milk from a nursing-bottle and a little sugared water on the end of a rag for nourishment. And then there are injunctions for the aunt, the grandmother. The child, brutally torn from the breast, writhes and shrieks; the mother kisses him for the last time, weeping. You are well aware that those tears are only half sincere, and that money will soon dry them, that terrible money which has so firm a grasp on the peasant entrails. But the scene is a heartrending one none the less, and reminds one unpleasantly of the breaking up of families among slaves.

The nurse has taken up her luggage, a few rags tied in a handkerchief.

"What! is that all you have?"

"Oh! my good M'sieu', we be so poor down our way. I don't own nothing but just what I got on my skin."

And that is almost literally true. First of all she must be fitted out, reclothed. That was premeditated. The first tradition among nurses, as among filibusters on their pillaging expeditions, is to travel empty-handed, without embarrassing baggage; the second is to procure a huge trunk, the trunk to hold the *harvest.* For no matter how much you may pet her, how much pains you may bestow upon this savage admitted to your household under these circumstances, who is at first so strangely out of tune with the refinements of a Parisian interior, with her hoarse voice, her incomprehensible patois, her strong odor of the stable and the fields; no matter how much you may wash her tanned skin and try to teach her a little French, a little neatness, and to dress becomingly; the Burgundian or Morvandian brute will reappear constantly, on every occasion, in the daintiest and most thoroughly polished *nounou* of them all. Beneath your roof, by your fireside, she remains the peasant, the enemy, transported from her dreary home, from her hopeless destitution to the lap of luxury and splendor.

Everything about her arouses her greed, she would like to carry it all away to her hole, to her lair, where the cattle are and the man. In real-

ity she has come for that and for that alone; the *harvest* is her fixed idea. The harvest, a surprising word in this connection, acquires unexpected elasticity — the elasticity of a boa-constrictor's maw — in the nurse's vocabulary. It means gifts and wages, what is paid them and what is given them, what they pick up and what they steal, the bric-à-brac and the savings which they look forward to exhibiting, on their return, to their envious neighbors. To swell and fatten this blessed harvest, your purse and your kind heart are systematically laid under contribution. And you have not the nurse alone to deal with; the man, the grandmother, the aunt, are her confederates, and in an obscure hamlet of which you do not even know the name, a whole family, a whole tribe is concocting against you schemes worthy of a tribe of Red Indians. Every week a letter arrives, written in a cunning, heavy hand, and sealed with dough bearing the impress of a thimble.

At first you are touched by these comical, ingenuous epistles, with their complicated orthography, their flowery style, sentences twisted and retwisted like the cap in the hand of a peasant who is trying not to appear awkward, and the minute superscriptions such as Durandeau imagined in his military sketches:

"To Madame, Madame Phrasie Darnet, nurse at M. ——, 18 Rue de Vosges, 3d Arrondissement, Paris, Seine, France, Europe, etc."

Patience. These flowers of rustic innocence will not move you to compassion for long. They

are all aimed at your purse, they all breathe the same perfume of rural extortion and idyllic rascality. — "This is to tell you, my dear and worthy wife, — but you need not mention it to our respected masters and benefactors, because they would perhaps insist on giving you more money, and it is never well to abuse — " Thereupon follows a circumstantial account of a terrible storm which has wrought havoc throughout the province. Crops destroyed, grain beaten down, grass-land ruined. It rains in the house as hard as in the open fields, because the hailstones have made holes in the roof; and the pig, such a fine beast, that they were going to kill for Easter, is dying of the fright he had when he heard the thunder.

At another time the cow is dead, the oldest of the little ones has broken his arm, the poultry have epilepsy. A terrible succession of catastrophes, like the plagues of Egypt, fall upon that one poor roof, upon that bit of land. It is a vulgar, stupid lie, sewn with thread so white that it dazzles your eyes. No matter, you must pretend to be deceived by these fables, and pay again and always, or else beware of Nounou! She will not complain, she will not ask for anything — oh! no, certainly not! — but she will sulk and pretend to weep in corners, where she is very sure of being seen. And when Nounou weeps, Bébé cries, because great grief *turns the blood*, and turned blood makes the milk sour. A money-order by post at once, and let Nounou laugh!

These great weekly *coups* do not prevent the

nurse from working daily at her little individual harvest. There are shirts for the little one, the poor disinherited wretch, all alone at home sucking the goat; a petticoat for herself, a coat for her man, and permission to pick up whatever is left lying around, the unnoticed trifles which go to the scavengers. Permission is not always asked, by the way, Nounou having brought with her from her village some peculiar ideas concerning the property of the good Parisians. The same woman who would not, in her own country, pick up a neighbor's apple through a hole in the hedge, will tranquilly pillage your whole house, without the slightest qualm of conscience. For the zouave to despoil the Arab or the colonist is not stealing, it is *looting, carrying on his trade.* A vast difference! So, according to Nounou's ideas, to rob the bourgeois is to *reap her harvest.*

In my house, a few years ago — for it is my own experience which qualifies me to deliver this lecture on nurses — some silver table-ware disappeared. Several servants were open to suspicion; it was necessary to order a search, to open trunks. I already had my own convictions concerning the harvest, and I began with Nounou's trunk. Never did the thieving magpie's hiding-place in a church-tower, never did the hollow tree in which a crow with the collector's mania has deposited the fruit of his marauding, offer such a motley collection of brilliant and useless objects; carafe stoppers and door-knobs, buckles, bits of glass, bobbins without thread, nails, pieces

of silk, clippings, chocolate wrappers, colored plates from fashion magazines, and, quite at the bottom, under the *harvest*, the missing silver, itself a part of the harvest.

Up to the very last moment Nounou refused to confess; she protested her innocence, declaring that she had taken the knives and forks with no thought of wrong-doing, to use as *shoe-horns*. However, she would not postpone her departure until the next day. She was afraid that we should change our minds and send for the gendarmes. It was dark and raining. We watched her as she disappeared under the arch of the staircase, silent, sullen, turned savage once more and for good, refusing all assistance, and dragging her trunk, heavy with the precious harvest, with both hands.

Fancy your child in the custody of such brute beasts! You will see that constant surveillance, not relaxed for a single moment, is no more than is necessary. If you leave the nurse to her own devices, she will never take Bébé out of doors to drink in the sunlight, to breathe the fresh air in the green squares. Paris, in reality, is a dreary place to her; and she would prefer to stay by the fire, without a light, with the child on her knees and her nose in the embers as in the country, sleeping her heavy peasant's sleep for four hours at a stretch. It is the devil's own task to prevent her from taking the nursling to sleep with her in her own bed. — "What then, a cradle? These bourgeois do have whims, they are exact-

ing, on my word! Would n't it be better to have him here, close by, and give him the breast, without waking up and getting cold, when he cries?" To be sure, they sometimes suffocate the baby when they turn over; but accidents of that sort are rare.

And then the traditions of the country declare that a nursing child can eat anything, that he can safely be stuffed with sour pears and green plums. Inflammation sets in, you hurry off to the doctor, and the child dies. At other times he has convulsions or meningitis, as the result of a fall, an unavowed blow. Ah! how much better our Parisian women would do to follow Jean Jacques's advice and nurse their children themselves! To be sure it is not easy always, nor for all women, in the enervating air of large cities, which leaves so many mothers without milk.

But what are we to think of the bourgeois mothers in the provinces, who, from no necessity but purely because they are habitually careless and indolent, put their children out to nurse for two or three years in the families of peasants whom they have never seen? Most of them die. Those who survive return home in the guise of frightful little monsters whom their parents do not recognize, with the rustic manners of little men, with harsh, loud voices and speaking barbarous patois.

I remember that, one day when I was in the provinces, in the South, some friends suggested an excursion to Pont du Gard. The plan was to

have an *al fresco* breakfast on the bank of the river, in the shadow of the ruins. As it happened, "the little one" was out at nurse in that direction, and we were to look in on him as we passed. A large party was made up, the neighbors were invited, an omnibus was hired and we started, raising a cloud of blinding, burning dust in the wind and sunlight. After about an hour we saw from afar, on the top of a hill, a brown speck in the middle of the snow-white road. The spot increased in size as we approached. It was the nurse, who had been notified of our coming and was on the lookout for us. The omnibus stopped and she passed the little one in at the door, shrieking at the top of his lungs.

"What a fine fellow he is! How much he looks like you! The little one's getting on nicely, is he, nurse?" The whole omnibus kisses him, deeply moved, then the little squalling bundle is passed out again through the door, and we start off at a gallop, leaving the child and the nurse standing in the glaring sunlight, in the parched, crackling dust of that Southern road.

That is the way sturdy youths are made, you will say.

I should say as much; those who survive it have been tried as by fire.

NOTES UPON PARIS. — THE RIDICULOUS SALONS.

OF all the manias of the time there is none more amusing, more singular, more fertile in absurd surprises, than this passion for receptions, teas and small dancing-parties, which rages from October to April in every social circle of the Parisian bourgeoisie. Even in the most modest households, in the most retired corners of Batignolles or Levallois-Perret, one must receive, have a salon, a day at home. I know some unfortunate creatures who go every Monday to drink tea on Rue Terrier-aux-Lapins.

It is all very well for those who have any sort of interest in these little functions. For instance, doctors who are just starting in practice and wish to make themselves known in the quarter, parents without means who are looking out for an opportunity to marry their daughters, professors of elocution and music-mistresses, who receive their pupils' families once a week. These parties always savor a little of the class-room, of the prize competition. There are bare walls, stiff-backed chairs, waxed, uncarpeted floors, an air of artificial good-humor, and rapt silence when the professor announces: "Monsieur Edmond

will now recite a scene from *Le Misanthrope*," or "Mademoiselle Élisa will play a *Polonaise* by Weber."

But, in addition to these, how many poor devils there are who receive for no reason, with no selfish aim, simply for the pleasure of receiving, of putting themselves to all manner of inconvenience once a week, and of assembling in their salons some fifty or more people who will sneer at them when they go away. There are salons that are too small, all length, where the guests, as they sit talking together, have the constrained attitude of passengers in an omnibus; apartments transformed, turned topsy-turvy, with passage-ways, portières and screens in unexpected places, and the mistress of the house exclaiming in dismay: "Not that way!" Sometimes a tell-tale door opens enough to afford a glimpse of Monsieur, in the lower regions, returning home worn-out, drenched with rain, wiping his hat with his handkerchief, or hurriedly devouring a bit of cold meat at a table laden with dishes. There is dancing in the halls, in the bedrooms, from which the furniture has been removed, and, as you can see nothing but candelabra, bronze brackets, hangings and a piano, you ask yourself with a thrill of horror: "Where will they sleep to-night?"

I have known a very curious house of this sort, where the chambers, arranged in a long line, each two or three steps higher than the last, resembled floor landings, so that the guests at

the rear seemed to be standing on a platform, and from that vantage-ground humiliated the latest arrivals, buried up to the chin in the shoals of the first room. You can imagine how convenient it was for dancing! But no matter! Once a month a large evening-party was given there. Divans were brought from a little restaurant opposite, and with the divans a waiter in pumps and a white cravat, the only one of the guests who wore a gold watch and chain. You should have seen the mistress of the house, in a frenzy of excitement, with dishevelled hair, red as a lobster from the exertion of so many preparations, run after that man, pursue him from room to room, calling: "Monsieur le garçon! Monsieur le garçon!"

And the company at these functions! Always the same company, whom one meets everywhere, who know one another, seek one another's society, attract one another. A whole world of old ladies and young girls in ambitious but faded costumes; the velvet is made of cotton, the percaline pretends to be silk, and you feel that all those shabby fringes, those torn flowers, those discolored ribbons have been hastily assorted and thrown together with the audacious comment: "Bah! at night they won't show." They cover themselves with rice-powder, false jewels, false laces: "Bah! at night they won't show." The curtains have lost their color, the furniture is falling to pieces, the carpets are threadbare. "Bah! at night," etc. And that is how people

give parties and reap the glory of seeing four cabs, attracted by the glare of the candles, stop in front of their door at three o'clock in the morning; but the cabmen derive little profit therefrom, for, as a general rule, all the guests go their way on foot, making at impossible hours the long trip of the absent omnibus, the young girls leaning on their father's arms, their satin shoes encased in clogs.

Oh! how many of these laughable salons I have seen! At what strange evening parties I aired my first coat, in the days when, an ingenuous provincial, knowing life only through the pages of Balzac, I deemed it to be my duty to go into society! One must, like myself, have journeyed for two successive winters into every corner of bourgeois Paris, to realize how far this mania for receptions of some sort can go. It is all a little vague in my memory; I do remember, however, the tiny apartment of a certain government clerk, a queer little salon where, in order to make more room, the piano had to be moved in front of the kitchen door. We placed our liqueur glasses on music racks, and when some one sang a touching ditty, the maid would come and rest her elbows on the piano to listen.

As this unfortunate menial was a prisoner in her kitchen, Monsieur himself undertook the exterior service. I can see him now, shivering in his black coat, coming up from the cellar with huge lumps of coal wrapped in a newspaper. The newspaper bursts, the coal rolls on the floor, and

meanwhile some one at the piano continues to sing:

"I love to hear the oar, at evening, plashing in the waves."

And that other house, that fantastic fifth floor apartment, where the floor served as vestibule, the stair-rail as cloak-room, where the odds and ends of furniture were all crowded into a single room, the only one which could be lighted and warmed, an advantage which did not prevent its being dark and cold as ice, in spite of everything, because of the desolation and wretchedness that one felt lurking about in the desert of empty rooms. Poor creatures! about eleven o'clock, they would ask you very ingenuously: "Are you warm? Will you take a little refreshment?" And they would throw the windows wide open to admit the air from outside, by way of refreshment. After all, that was better than the poisonous colored syrups and the dry, crumbly little cakes preserved so carefully from week to week. Did I not know one hostess who used to place little packages of wet tea on her window-sill to dry every Tuesday morning, and thus made the same tea do duty two or three Mondays in succession? Oh! when the bourgeois allow their imaginations full play, no one knows where they will stop. Nowhere, not even in the heart of Bohemia, have I fallen in with such odd types as among them.

I remember one lady in white, whom we called the lady *aux gringuenotes*, because she was always

complaining of *gringuenotes* in her stomach! No one ever discovered what she meant.

And that other, a corpulent matron, married to a law-tutor, who always brought some of her husband's pupils to dance with her — all foreigners, a Moldavian enveloped in furs, a Persian with ample skirts.

And the monsieur who had on his cards *tourist of the world*, to indicate that he had made the tour of the world!

And, in the salon of a parvenu family, that old peasant woman, three-fourths deaf and idiotic, bundled clumsily in her silk gown, to whom her daughter would go and say in a simpering tone: "Mamma, Monsieur So-and-So is going to recite something." — The poor old creature, not understanding, would move about in her chair, with a foolish, frightened smile: "Oh! yes — yes." It was at that same house that they made a speciality of great men's relations. They would inform you with a great affectation of mystery: "Ambroise Thomas's brother will be with us this evening," or "a cousin of Gounod's," or "Gambetta's aunt." Never Gambetta nor Gounod, however. Then there was — but I must stop, for the list is inexhaustible.

IN THE PROVINCES. — A MEMBER OF THE JOCKEY CLUB.

AFTER dinner these worthy Cevenols had insisted on showing me their club. It was of the unvarying type of clubs in small towns, four rooms in a line on the first floor of a venerable mansion fronting on the mall, long mirrors past their prime, uncarpeted floors, and here and there on the mantelpieces — where Paris dailies of the day before yesterday lay scattered about — a number of bronze lamps, the only ones in town which were not blown out on the stroke of nine.

When I arrived there were very few members in the rooms. A few old fellows were snoring away with their faces buried in their newspapers, or silently playing whist, and in the green light cast by the lamp-shades those bald craniums leaning toward one another and the piles of counters in their little silk basket had the same polished yellow tinge of old ivory. Outside on the mall, we could hear the bugles blowing the retreat and the footsteps of the promenaders returning home, dispersing among the sloping streets and the long flights of steps of that mountain town built at various levels. After a few last blows of door-knockers in the profound silence,

the young men, set free from family repasts and promenades, trooped noisily up the stairs to the club. I saw a score or more of sturdy mountaineers, freshly gloved, with low-cut waistcoats, rolling collars and attempts at hair-curling *à la Russe*, which made them all resemble great dolls painted in brilliant colors. It was the most comical sight you can imagine. It seemed to me as if I were attending a performance of a very Parisian play by Meilhac or Dumas *fils*, acted by amateurs from Tarascon or some more distant locality. All the weary, bored, disgusted airs, the soft lisping speech which is the height of fashion among Parisian swells, I found two hundred leagues from Paris, exaggerated by the awkwardness of the actors. You should have seen those great boys accost one another with a languid air: "How goes it, old fellow?" — stretch themselves out on divans in attitudes denoting utter prostration, yawn and stretch their arms before the mirrors, and say with the provincial accent: "It 's perfectly rank. It 's a frightful bore." It is a touching fact that they called their *cercle* the *club*, which like good Southerners they pronounced *clab*. I could hear nothing but that word on all sides. The waiter at the *clab*, the rules of the *clab*.

I was asking myself how all these Parisian follies could have travelled so far and taken root in the keen and health-giving air of the mountains, when I spied the pale face and curly head of the little Duc de M——, member of the

Emile Augier.

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Goupil & Cie Paris

Jockey Club, of the Rowing Club, of the Delamarre Stables, and of divers other learned societies. This young nobleman, whose extravagant performances have made him famous on the boulevards, had just squandered in a few months the last million but one of his father's inheritance, and his dismayed adviser had sent him to rusticate in that out-of-the-way corner of the Cevennes. I understood then the languishing airs of all those youths, their heart-shaped waistcoats, their affected pronunciation; I had their model before my eyes.

The member of the Jockey Club was surrounded and fawned upon the moment he entered the room. They repeated his remarks, imitated his gestures and his attitudes, with the result that that pale image of dandydom, wasted and sickly, but with an air of distinction in spite of all, seemed to be reflected on all sides in vulgar rustic mirrors which exaggerated his features. On that evening, in my honor I doubt not, Monsieur le Duc discoursed much upon literature and the stage. With what contempt, and what ignorance! You should have heard him call Emile Augier "that M'sieu'!" and Dumas *fils* "little Dumas." On every subject he emitted very ill-defined ideas floating in unfinished sentences, wherein the *What's-his-names, Thingumbobs, What-d'ye-call-hims* replaced the words that refused to come at his bidding and the little dashes which dramatic authors who do not know how to write sadly abuse. In fine, this young nobleman

had never taken the trouble to think; but he had rubbed elbows with a great many people and had thereby acquired expressions and opinions which he kept at his tongue's end, and which made part of himself as truly as the curls that shaded his refined forehead. The subjects with which he was perfectly familiar were heraldic science, liveries, women and race-horses, and on those subjects the young provincials whose education he had undertaken had become almost as learned as himself.

The evening wore away thus amid the idle chatter of that melancholy stud-groom. About ten o'clock, the old men having departed and the whist tables being deserted, the young men sat down in their turn to a little game of baccarat. That had become the regular thing since the duke's arrival. I had taken a seat in the shadow, on a corner of the divan, and from there I had a very good view of all the players in the narrow circle of light cast by the lamps. The member of the Jockey Club was enthroned at the centre of the table, superbly indifferent, holding his cards with perfect grace and apparently caring little whether he won or lost. Ruined gamester as he was from the Parisian standpoint, he was still the richest of the party. But what courage it required for them, poor little devils, to maintain an impassive bearing! As the game became more exciting, I followed the expressions of the different faces with much interest. I saw lips tremble, eyes fill with tears, and fingers clutch

frantically at the cards. To dissemble their emotion the losers embroidered their ill luck with such expressions as: "I 'm getting excited, I 'm making an ass of myself;" but in that terrible Southern accent, significant and implacable, those Parisian exclamations lost the air of aristocratic indifference which they had on the little duke's lips.

Among the gamblers there was one who interested me particularly. He was a tall, overgrown fellow, very young, with the homely, honest face of a bearded child, ingenuous, countrified, primitive, despite the Demidoff curls—a face in which all his feelings could be read as in an open book. That boy lost all the time. Twice or thrice I had seen him leave the table and rush hastily from the room; in a few minutes he would return to his place, flushed and perspiring, and I said to myself: "Ah! you have been telling your mother or your sisters some cock-and-bull story in order to get more money." It was a fact that the poor devil always returned with full pockets and began to play with renewed excitement. But luck was pitilessly against him that night. He lost and lost. I felt that he was intensely wrought up, quivering with excitement, that he no longer had the strength to meet ill fortune with a bold face. At each card that fell his nails buried themselves in the woollen cloth; it was heart-rending.

Gradually, however, hypnotized by that provincial atmosphere of ennui and idleness, very tired too from my journey, I saw the card-table only as

a very vague, very faint luminous space, and I finally fell asleep to the murmur of voices and rustling cards. I was suddenly awakened by the sound of angry words, resounding through empty rooms. Everybody had gone. The only persons remaining in the room were the member of the Jockey Club and my tall friend, both seated at the table and playing. It was a serious game, écarté at ten louis; and a mere glance at the despairing expression on that honest bull-dog face told me that the mountaineer was still losing.

"My revenge!" he exclaimed angrily from time to time. The other, always perfectly calm, held his own against him; and at every new *coup* it seemed to me that an almost imperceptible smile, cruel and disdainful, curled his aristocratic lip. I heard them call *la belle!* then a violent blow on the table; it was all over, the poor wretch had lost everything.

He sat for a moment as if dazed, gazing at his cards without speaking, with his heart-shaped vest all awry, his shirt rumpled and wet as if he had been fighting. Then, as he saw the duke gathering up the gold pieces scattered over the cloth, he sprang to his feet with a terrible cry: "My money, for God's sake, give me back my money!" And thereupon, like the child he still was, he began to sob: "Give it back to me — give it back!" Ah! I promise you he lisped no more. His natural voice had come back to him, as heart-rending as the voice of a strong man to

whom tears come in floods and are a source of genuine suffering. His adversary, still cold and sneering, looked at him without moving an eyebrow. Thereupon the miserable fellow threw himself on his knees and said under his breath, in a trembling voice: "The money is n't mine. I stole it. My father left it with me to pay a note—" Shame choked him, he could not finish.

At the first suggestion that the money was stolen, the duke had risen. A slight flush rose to his cheeks. His face assumed an expression of pride which was very becoming. He emptied his pockets on the table, and, laying aside for the moment his coxcomb's mask, he said in a natural and kindly voice: "Take it back, idiot. Did you think we were playing in earnest?"

I would have liked to embrace that young gentleman!

IN THE PROVINCES. — THE GUÉRANDE RACES.

FIRST of all, let us tarry a moment in this charming and unique little town of Guérande, so picturesque with its old ramparts flanked by great towers and its moats filled with green water. Between the old stones the wild veronica grows in huge clusters, ivies and glycines cling to the projections and wind in and out, and terraced gardens display clumps of rose-bushes and drooping clematis along the edge of the battlements. As soon as you drive under the low arched postern, where the bells on the post-horses raise a merry, jingling echo, you enter a new country, an epoch five hundred years old. There are arched doorways, ogival doorways, venerable houses of irregular shape, of which the upper floors overhang the lower, with lines in the stone and defaced, weatherbeaten ornaments. On certain silent lanes are old manor-houses with high small-paned windows. The seignorial gates are closed, but between their disjointed planks one can see the stoop overgrown with verdure, clumps of hortensias by the door and the courtyard carpeted with weeds, where some crumbling well-curb or the ruins of some chapel form still another heap of stones covered with flowers and greenery.

For this is the true description of Guérande: a coquettish, flower-bedecked ruin.

Sometimes, above a worn and venerable knocker, the sign of a posting station or the escutcheons of a bailiff or notary are displayed bourgeois-fashion; but in most instances these ancient abodes have retained their aristocratic stamp, and by searching carefully one may find some of the great names of Bretagne buried in the silence of that little corner of France, which is in itself a whole past. In very truth a dreamy silence abides there. It prowls about that fourteenth century church, in whose shadow the fruit-women shield their flat baskets from the sun and knit without speaking. It hovers over those deserted walks, those moats filled with stagnant water, those peaceful streets through which a countrywoman passes from time to time, leading her cow, bare-footed, with a cord about her waist and a cap like Jeanne d'Arc's.

But on the day of the races the town presents a very different aspect. There is a constant going and coming of vehicles bringing bathers, male and female, from Croizic and Pouliguen. Wagons laden with peasants, lumbering, old-fashioned chariots which look as if they had just come out of a fairy tale, hired carrioles with old dowagers from the vicinity sitting in state therein, between maid servants in caps and pages in wooden shoes. They all arrive in the morning, in time for high mass. The bells ring out through the narrow streets, mingled with the clashing of barbers' scissors; and for two hours the church

is filled and the town deserted. At noon, at the first stroke of the *Angelus*, the doors are thrown open and the crowd pours forth into the little square, amid the psalm-singing of the beggars grouped under the porch, whose voices burst forth at the same moment. It is an extraordinary medley of all sorts of church music: Litanies, *Credos*, *Pater Nosters;* a display of sores and infirmities, of the leprosy of the Middle Ages. The very crowd contributes to this illusion of archaism: the women wear white caps ending in a point, with a circle of embroidery, over hair arranged in flat bands, — the fishwomen and salt-gatherers have floating strings or long fluted ribbons, — skirts with wide pleats and round wimples about the neck. The men have two very distinct costumes; the farmers wear a short jacket, high collar, and colored handkerchief arranged as a shirt front, which resembles the comb of the village rooster. The *paludiers*, or salt-gatherers, are dressed in the old Guérande costume, the long white blouse descending to the knee, the breeches, also white, secured with garters above the knee, and the black three-cornered hat, adorned with colored braid and steel buckles. This hat is worn in different ways. Married men wear it *en bataille*, like gendarmes; widowers and boys turn the points in a different way.

All these people scatter about through the old streets and assemble an hour later at the race-course, about a kilometre from the town, in a vast level tract bounded by the horizon.

From the raised stands the spectacle is a marvellous one. The sea in the background, a deep green flecked with white foam; nearer at hand the steeples of Croizic and the Bourg of Batz, and the fleecy salt marshes glistening in the sun at intervals in the broad sweep of marsh. The crowd comes from all directions across the fields. White caps appear above the hedges; the young men approach in groups, arm-in-arm, singing in their hoarse voices. Gait, songs, everything about them is ingenuous, primitive, almost uncivilized. The women who pass before us, with neckerchiefs of watered silk crossed over their wimples, heedless of the gentlemen in city hats who are staring at them, are reserved in manner and free from the slightest touch of coquetry or affectation. They have come to see, yes, indeed! but not to exhibit themselves. Pending the beginning of the races, all these people crowd behind the stands around great booths where wine and cider are sold, and cakes and sausages fried in the open air. At last the Guérande band arrives, surrounded by more noisy singing throngs, and interrupts the drinking for a moment. Every one hurries to find a place for the show; and in that rush of people scattering around the race-course, on the edge of ditches and of dismantled furrows, we remark the long white blouses of the salt-gatherers, which magnify their stature and make them look like Dominicans or Premonstrants. Indeed, that whole quarter of Bretagne gives one the impression of a huge convent. Even

toil is silent there. On our way to Guérande, we passed through villages which were as silent as the tomb, despite the activity of harvest time, and everywhere the threshers wielded their flails in unison, but without the slightest encouragement by speech or song. To-day, however, the cakes and cider and sausages have loosened the tongues of the young men, and all along the track there is a merry uproar.

The Guérande races are of two sorts: first there is the *citadine* race, one of those provincial steeplechases of which we have seen hundreds. People with green cards in their hats, a few carriages standing about the inclosure, a general effect of gay parasols and long dresses, all in imitation of Paris; that sort of thing has little interest for us; but the races for mules and native horses are extremely entertaining. It is a terrible task to arrange in line those little Breton mules, obstinate by birth as well as by nature. The music, the shouting, the bright colors on the stands terrify them. One or other of them is always bolting in the wrong direction, and it takes time to bring him back. The youths who ride them wear scarlet Catalan caps, jackets of the same color, very full short breeches, and their legs and feet are bare; they have no saddles, — simply bridles at which the mules pull and jerk with extraordinary viciousness. At last they are off. We watch them galloping madly across the plain. The red caps are terribly jolted, and, with their legs straight and rigid, struggle to keep their

mounts within the space marked by the ropes. At the turn more than one rider rolls on the grass along the course; but the race is not interrupted for that. The salt-gatherer who owns the beast rushes to the spot, leaves his unfortunate jockey to rise as best he can and straddles the mule himself in his long blouse, which he has not time to remove. The people on the stands smile disdainfully; but the good Bretons yonder, perched in the trees, standing along the ditches, stamp with joy and applaud with frantic yells. Every one naturally is interested in the animals from his commune. The men from the Bourg of Batz, from Saillé, from Pouliguen, from Escoublac, from Piriac, watch for their fellows to pass, encourage the riders and even rush from the ranks to urge on the mules with blows of their hats and handkerchiefs. Even some white caps, with ribbons fluttering in the sea-breeze, suddenly appear to see Jean-Marie Mahé pass, or Jean-Marie Madec, or some other Jean-Marie. After the mules come the native horses and mares, a little less wilful, a little less wild, but full of ardor none the less and contending valiantly for the prize.

Their echoing trot ploughs up the soil of the track; and while they are racing, we see beyond it all, out at sea, where a high wind is blowing, a fishing-boat sailing laboriously toward Croizic. This proximity of the sea imparts an extraordinary grandeur to the spectacle; and the horses, the carriages rolling back toward the town, the

groups scattered about the plain, stand out against a shifting greenish background, a horizon instinct with animation and immensity.

When we return to Guérande the daylight is beginning to fade. The illuminations are in course of preparation — colored lanterns in the tall trees on the promenades, fireworks on Place de l'Église, a platform at the foot of the ramparts for the bagpipers. But suddenly a miserable little shower, as fine and stinging as hail, interrupts the festivities. Everybody flies for shelter to the inns, in front of which the wagons and carriages stand, dripping, with shafts in the air. For an hour the town is perfectly silent; then the parties of young men begin to march through the streets, singing. The great caps and little green shawls venture outside, two by two. They had intended to dance a reel, and dance they will in spite of the rain. *Dame!* they will indeed! Soon all the young people are drawn up in lines in the lower rooms of the cabarets. Some dance to the music of the bagpipes, others to "mouth-music," as they say here. The floors tremble, the lamps are thick with dust, and the same slow and melancholy refrain is droned forth in all directions. Meanwhile the chariots and carrioles rumble away through the five gates of the town. The old manor-houses are closed and the flowering shrubs which cover the ramparts seem in the darkness to increase in size, to join and become one confused mass, like the enchanted bushes which surrounded the castle of the Sleeping Beauty.

IN THE PROVINCES. — A VISIT TO THE ISLAND OF HOUAT.

A BEAUTIFUL summer's day, clear and cool, had just dawned in the bay of Quiberon, as we stepped aboard the pilot-boat which was to take us to the island of Houat. The breeze, which is always stirring at some point of that line of ocean, was blowing straight toward our destination, skimming along the surface of the waves which curled and wrinkled at its touch.

In the distance one could follow the coast-line by a strip of beach or a white house suddenly bathed in sunlight, brilliant spots between the deep blue of the waves and the monotonous blue of the sky, broken only by the light, fleecy, ragged clouds which the sailors hereabout call "horses' tails," and which indicate a fresh breeze for the afternoon.

The journey seemed short to us.

Nothing can be more uniform in appearance than the sea in fine weather; waves succeeding one another in perfect rhythm, plashing against the boat in murmuring foam, rising and falling, kept in motion by a strange restlessness, in which the storm lies hidden; and yet nothing is more varied in reality. Everything assumes tremendous importance on that surface, endowed with motion

and with life. There are ships in the offing, the mail-packet from Belle-Isle passing in the distance, her smoke trailing behind like a plume, fishing-smacks with white or tan-colored sails, schools of porpoises rolling through the waves, their sharp noses appearing above the surface, and islets from which whirling masses of gulls fly noisily away, or a flock of cormorants with their broad wings of birds of prey, made to soar and to flee.

On our way we pass the lighthouse of La Teignouse, perched on a rock; and although we are moving very fast, we have a very clear view of the reef and of the two human beings who dwell upon it. As we pass, one of the keepers, his blouse puffed out by the wind, is going down the little iron ladder which descends perpendicularly to the islet, forming an exterior staircase. His companion, seated in a hollow of the rock, is fishing dejectedly; and the sight of those two figures, so infinitely small in the vast expanse surrounding them, the white masonry of the lighthouse, its lantern, pallid and dull at that hour of the day, the weight of the great steam-bell, which rings on foggy nights — all these details of which we catch a passing glimpse suffice to give us a striking impression of that exile in the open sea and of the life led by the light-keepers, confined for weeks at a time in that hollow, resonant sheet-iron turret, where the voices of the sea and wind are repeated with such savage emphasis that men are obliged to shout in one another's ear to make themselves heard.

As soon as we have doubled the lighthouse, the island of Houat rises slowly on the horizon, and over the crests of the waves its rocky surface appears, whereon the sun casts a mirage of vegetation, of the tints of ripening crops and the velvety sheen of fields of grass.

As we approach, the aspect changes, the real nature of the place becomes apparent — barren, scorched by sun and sea, bristling with beetling cliffs; on the right a dismantled, abandoned fort; on the left a gray windmill, which shows you how hard the wind is blowing on shore, and a few very low houses grouped around their church spire; it is all very dismal, desolate, silent. One would think that it was an uninhabited spot, were it not for the flocks scattered over the hillside and through the rocky valleys of the island, wandering about, lying down or browsing on the scanty, wild vegetation.

At intervals, amid the desolate cliffs, are little inlets describing graceful curves bordered with light sand. In one of these inlets we disembark, not without difficulty, for at low tide there is not water enough for the skiff, and we are obliged to land on wet slippery rocks, to which the seaweed clings with its long green hair, which the water disentangles and dilates, but which is heaped up for the moment in heavy sticky masses where we lose our footing at every step. At last, after many efforts, we reach the top of the high cliffs which command the whole sweep of the horizon.

In this clear weather, which brings the shore

of the mainland nearer, the view is beautiful. There is the church of Croizic and of the Bourg of Batz, ten or twelve leagues away, and the whole irregular coast line of the Morbihan, Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuiz, the Vannes and Auray rivers, Locmariaquer, Plouharmel, Carnac, the Bourg of Quiberon and its little hamlets scattered all along the peninsula. In the opposite direction the dark line of Belle-Isle stretches away toward the Mer Sauvage, and the houses of Le Palais gleam white in a patch of sunlight. But while the view of the outside world is magnified as it were, the view of Houat is altogether lost where we stand. Spire, fort, mill, all have disappeared in the inequalities of a surface as rough and billowy as the sea which surrounds it. We direct our steps toward the village by a winding path built between the deceptive low Breton walls, made of flat stones and abounding in détours and branches.

On the way we notice the flora of the island, of marvellous beauty and variety for that storm-beaten rock; the *Houat lily*, double and as fragrant as our own, large mallows, climbing rose-bushes, and the sea-pink, whose faint, sweet odor harmonizes naturally with the shrill song of the gray skylarks with which the island is overrun. Fields of freshly-cut grain and potatoes lie on either side of us; but in all the fallow land the furze, the melancholy furze, sturdy and well armed, runs everywhere, climbs and clings, with yellow flowers scattered among its thorns. As we approach, the cattle turn their heads; the

cows, accustomed to the flat cap and the Morbihan hat, follow us a long while with their great motionless eyes. Everywhere we see cattle, scattered here and there, unfettered and unwatched.

At last the village appears, in a hollow sheltered from the tempest and the sea mists, with its low, poor houses crowded together, as if to show a united front to the wind, and separated, not by lanes, for their straight lines would give the tempest an opening, but by *carrefours*, little open spaces of irregular shape, which, at this season, serve as threshing-floors for threshing the grain.

Half wild horses, of a breed somewhat resembling the Camargue breed, harnessed by twos or threes, go round and round in a narrow circle in these irregular squares, trampling the grain and causing the chaff to fly about in the sunlight. A woman guides them, a handful of straw in her hand; other women, armed with pitchforks, spread the grain on the ground. There is nothing striking in the costume: shabby clothes, discolored and of no special pattern, neckerchiefs yellow with age shading earth-colored, sunburned faces; but the scene itself is picturesquely primitive. There is a medley of neighs, of rustling straw and of loud voices uttering the harsh guttural syllables of the Breton dialect.

Such as it is, this poor Morbihan village makes you think of some African *douar;* there is the same stifling air, vitiated by the manure piled in the doorways, the same familiarity between men and beasts, the same isolation of a small group

of human beings in the midst of a vast expanse of solitude; furthermore the doors are low, the windows narrow, and there are none in the walls which look toward the sea. One has a consciousness of destitution struggling against the hostile elements.

The women overwork themselves in the fields and look after the cattle. The men fish at the peril of their lives. At this moment they are all at sea, save one old man, shivering with fever, whom we see seated beside his ropemaker's wheel, the miller, who is a stranger on the island and is paid by the month, and Monsieur le Curé, the most exalted personage on the island of Houat, and its greatest curiosity. Here the priest exercises supreme authority in all matters and is as absolute as a captain on board his ship. With his priestly authority he combines the authority of his administrative functions. He is deputy-mayor of the village and syndic of the seamen's guild; he also has the superintendence of all military works, forts large and small, erected on the island, which have no garrison in time of peace. If a dispute arises between two fishermen on the subject of a basket of lobsters, or the division of a catch, behold Monsieur le Curé transformed into a justice of the peace. If there is a little too much noise at the inn on Sunday evening, he hastily throws a scarf across his cassock, and performs at need the functions of village constable.

Not long ago, indeed, he descended to even more degrading duties. He had the monopoly of the sale of liquor and a nun doled it out for

him through a wicket. He also had the key of the common oven where every family baked its bread. These were precautions of exile, regulations governing the distribution of the sea-stores sent to this island, which is as truly at the mercy of the waves as any vessel.

Within three or four years the old customs have been modified to some extent; but the principle on which they are based is still in full vigor, and the present curé of the island, an intelligent and energetic man, seems to us to possess the strength of character and will to enforce respect for his multifold authority. He occupies a modest vicarage near the church, where two poplars, a superb fig-tree, a flower garden and a few wandering hens transport us to the heart of the continent.

Beside the parsonage is the school for boys and girls, under the management of nuns, who also have charge of the distribution of medicines to all these poor people, nurse them and advise them.

The sisters' house is also the terminus of the submarine telegraph which connects Houat with Belle-Isle and the continent. One of the sisters receives and sends messages; as we passed, I saw through the window her starched hood bending over the electric needle. We receive some other interesting information concerning the island of Houat and its population, in the little white-washed dining-room with all its rafters in plain sight, into which we are ushered by Monsieur le Curé, who invites us to sit down and rest. There

are no paupers in Houat. A communal fund supplies every one with the necessities of life. Fish are plentiful along the coast, the fishermen carry them to market at Croizic or Auray and always sell them at a good price; but the lack of a safe anchorage along that rock-bound coast prevents the people of Houat from being perfectly happy. It happens not infrequently in bad weather that the boats are obliged to seek shelter where they may from the greatest perils. Sometimes accidents happen even in the harbor, which is insufficiently protected by a short jetty of primitive construction. So that the sole ambition of the curé of Houat is to obtain an anchorage for the seven smacks which compose the navy of the island. We left him in that hope.

On leaving the village we passed the church, where the windows are tinged with changing shades of blue by the reflection of the sea; we paused a moment in the wild, silent little cemetery, where the few scattered black crosses seem like masts in the harbor against the horizon which surrounds us; and as we expressed our surprise at the small number of tombs and inscriptions contained in a cemetery of such great age, we were informed that until last year — another effect of the maritime customs of the island of Houat — they had always dug graves at random and committed the dead to the dust, unnamed, just as, on long voyages, they are committed to the passing wave.

ULTIMA.

ULTIMA.

FOR Edmond de Goncourt's friends, and for them alone — for to others these pages, like everything which has no other merit than that it is inspired by affection, would seem childish — I describe the illustrious author's last visit to Champrosay, in other words the last moments of his life. That visit was so brief — from Saturday evening to an early hour on Thursday — that I have been able, supplementing my own memory by that of the members of my household, to clothe my narrative in the familiar, vivid form of a journal, which he preferred above any other because of its warm atmosphere of intimacy, its flexibility, and because it more nearly approaches actual verity, fits it more closely; the form to which he resorted to describe the death of his brother, an imperishable masterpiece of sympathy and clearness of vision. Not that I assume the power to write anything so thrilling, so profoundly touching as those leaves of the *Journal des Goncourt* of June, 1870, but my affection, as a friend and as one who witnessed his last moments, moves me to try to do for him what he did for his brother Jules.

Saturday evening, July 11.

EDMOND DE GONCOURT arrived at six o'clock this evening. I went to meet him at the Ris-Orangis station — ten minutes from Champrosay on the other bank of the Seine — in the two-horse landau which I have kept in the country during the summer, ever since my legs became indolent. The approaching fêtes of the 14th of July, the extraordinary number of cars and the multiplication of stations have delayed the train half an hour. At last the gate opens, people flow through in waves upon waves, but not my *Grand.* What has happened? I am beginning to worry, aware of the weariness, the intense weariness which "his cursed *Journal*" has caused him of late. If only he is not ill; that threatened attack of his liver trouble he mentioned in his last letter. But no. The coachman has turned on his seat with an air of delight: "There 's Monsieur de Goncourt!" He is so cordial and open-handed — all my servants adore him.

My son Lucien, who has met him at the Lyon station in Paris, appears first, carrying a red leather bag which I know well, and the sight of which makes me smile affectionately. Outside of, aside from the actual flesh and blood, and fraught perhaps with even deeper meaning, we all have what I will call our little effigies, the impression of ourselves, of our ways, of our gestures, which we leave upon all the objects which we constantly use. If some one whom we love

dearly disappears, leaves us forever, a garden hat hanging on a nail, a broken eye-glass in a drawer, often brings him before us more vividly than a portrait, affects us far more deeply. In my eyes that little red bag, which I have seen so many times on the Champrosay road, is Goncourt travelling, Goncourt astray in railway stations, his horror of the crowds and the jostling, the feverish unrest of his hands, the long, supple hands of a born artist. On the instant I see his poor dear hands, empty and quivering with impatience, waving in the distance.

"Pray what has happened to you, my Goncourt?"

He shouts at me from afar:

"They have lost my trunk, little one — there are times when one has no luck."

And while he continues his altercation with the railway people, I contemplate admiringly the dauntless virility, the slender grace of his seventy-four years, which seem no more than fifty. Sturdy and erect, in his gray suit and little hat of brown straw, he has never seemed to me younger than to-day.

Luckily the trunk is not lost, it is simply delayed until the evening train, when the coachman will come and fetch it. Goncourt, reassured, enters the carriage; we embrace and the landau starts. At closer quarters our friend does not look so well. His eye seems restless and preoccupied, his skin is burning. He speaks nervously.

"Ah! I tell you I have had trouble enough,

and of a superior quality. Godfrey told you, did n't he? — a line omitted in my text, and the botheration it caused — all the excellent people whom I wounded unintentionally. And threats of law-suits, volumes to be withdrawn from circulation; and that Fasquelle with his tranquil air. For my part, I passed two nights without sleep, tossing and turning, till my shirt was twisted like a well-rope. I thought I was surely going to have an attack. But, no, I think I shall avoid it."

Already, the cool air of the river as we drive across, the fresh breeze from the avenue of poplars, as from a huge fan, the prevailing peacefulness of the atmosphere relax his nerves and soften him.

"And how is everybody here, little one? Léon is still at the sea-shore, so Lucien tells me; he also told me of your old Tim's death; you must have felt very badly."

"Very, Goncourt; we have been closely attached to each other for thirty-five years. Now I have no friend left in the south but Mistral; in the north I have only you."

The carriage has stopped, we are at home.

Mademoiselle Edmée, aged ten, tall and slender in her English frock, with her red-gold hair falling in bunches over her shoulders, leaps on her godfather's neck.

"*Bonjour*, godfather. How do you do? — you know, the gardener's cat has a kitten — oh! such a pretty one, with blue eyes. And the little

donkeys have had their hair cut; and we have a new cow that gives good milk, but she 's very naughty."

Although deeply interested in this local chronicle, Goncourt is obliged to interrupt it in order to salute the mistress of the house and her mother, Madame A., who come to greet him. Before going up to his room he gazes longingly through my study at the background of verdure sloping to the bank of the Seine.

"I say, Madame Daudet" — *Mon Dieu!* it seems to me that I hear him now — "suppose we take a turn in the garden? Come, master, take my arm."

And we wander, all three, among the paths, where the daylight still lingers, halting by flower-beds whose fragrance evaporates in the warmth of the declining day. Madame Daudet shows him her roses, he tells us about his own, his *espaliero*, the trellised porches of his house at Auteuil, where he has workmen even now, repairing the roof. Luckily Pélagie is at hand, keeping watch and ward, sternly forbidden to leave the premises on any pretext. And suddenly, as if his anxiety concerning his unroofed house has reminded him of other causes of anxiety, he returns to the annoying mischance he told me about a moment ago. I feel that he feels some embarrassment about telling us of the fresh irritation his journal is causing him. Doubtless he foresees one of the friendly discussions which we have had heretofore on the same subject, and which can all be summarized thus:

I. — You are not careful enough, my Goncourt; you take for good money whatever any one chooses to hand you.

GONCOURT. — Oh! if I took your advice I should never believe anything.

And then, after an exchange of feints, he would deal me this home thrust, to close the discussion:

"After all, little one, whose fault is it? Who but you persuaded me to publish my journal?"

"Very good, but according to my idea you should not have gone beyond the year '71, Jules' death, the siege and the Commune. That year makes a sort of fissure in contemporary history, or a high cemetery wall riddled with bullets, at which everything stops. The other side of the wall is a hundred leagues away from us; on this side everything is within reach of our hand, there is no recoil, no perspective. I had a feeling that as to anything of later date you would be accused of writing nothing but gossip and small talk."

"Might not the same thing be said of Saint-Simon?"

This discussion, almost always the same, shall not be repeated to-day. Our friend seems too depressed, disturbed above all by the enmities, the indignation which his journal has kindled against him; they have gone so far as to threaten him with an action for defamation of character.

"And yet I publish nothing but the truth or what I believe to be the truth; I tell the truth about those whom I love most dearly, myself as well as others."

And the sincere, the ingenuous tone, the straightforward glance, the glance of an honest man, which accompany these words, would suffice to absolve him in the eyes of his most determined enemies.

But the dinner-gong sounded a long while ago.

"What luck to be all by ourselves!" says Goncourt as we take our seats.

And when he learns that we had thought of inviting two or three literary friends to make the house more lively, he protests, declares his preference for a family party; to have company on Thursday will be quite enough.

Nevertheless no one is more fond than he of literary chat, those games of intellectual tennis in which the players are enlivened by the smiles of a gallery, and words and ideas fly back and forth as if from rackets. This latest experience with his journal must have changed him, depressed him strangely, to give him this inclination for solitude and a small dinner-table. I should be greatly surprised if such savagery is of long duration with this thrice-refined devotee of art, this model of super-exquisite civilization. The dinner speedily enlivens him and he eats heartily, something that he has not done for a long while. Every day, he tells us, he is thirsty only, his tongue is dry, there is a bitter taste in his mouth, and he has been living at a restaurant on a slice of melon and a plate of soup, with a glass of good champagne to wash it down.

"Oh! Monsieur de Goncourt," the grandmother

interrupts him, moved to indignation. "For a man subject to liver complaint!"

"That makes no difference, Madame. These doctors are knaves. As soon as you 're ill, they ask you confidentially what you like best and then proceed to deprive you of it, like cowards. That 's what they call dieting."

The dispute waxes warm, is carried to other subjects. We recognize once more the Goncourt of the good old days, him whom none but his intimate friends ever knew, artless and loving, entirely free from moodiness and distrust, and yet endowed with a disconcerting keenness of vision, an armed candor which I have never observed in any other mortal. Divers facts concerning Auteuil and his villa, Fasquelle the publisher's banquet, an afternoon in the country, at his dear Mirabeau's, in company with the poet Robert de Montesquiou, his meeting with the very learned author of *Aphrodite*, at Jean Lorrain's table — on such varied themes his mind played until the end of the meal, which seemed to us very short. It was quite dark when we went out on the terrace and stood there a few moments. The air was very heavy. Silent lightning flashes laid bare the lowest depths of the sky. On the shores of the ponds the frogs emitted their crystal notes. We had been talking of a literary friend whose disposition, morals and talent had undergone a curious modification, quite without warning, and from that subject we passed to the transformations which life imposes upon certain beings

through contact with different types and through the underhand strokes of destiny, and Goncourt exclaimed, putting his head out of the sheltered bay in which he had shiveringly taken refuge, despite the sultriness of the air:

"Aha! my boy, in that case what becomes of your theory that we *are all put in type very early in life*, and that, after thirty, the impressions that life leaves with us are simply reprints?"

MADAME DAUDET. — That theory of his is sickening, abominable; you should see how I slashed at it in his little note-book!

GONCOURT. — And you were quite justified, Madame, because it is not true. I believe, on the other hand, that man changes constantly to the last day of his life, that we change our skins an infinite number of times, like snakes.

I. — You are probably right, Goncourt, and it only proves what dangerous things to handle formulæ are. Our best ideas perish because of their formulæ, which wither before the ideas themselves. Opportunism, naturalism, in themselves are not evil things; but the label is no longer of any value. Don't you remember our telling Zola that one evening?

GONCOURT. — At a dinner with Flaubert, on Place de l'Opéra-Comique, was n't it? That was a devilish long while ago!

The flashes became more frequent, great drops of rain pattered on the veranda. We returned to the salon for tea, served by Mademoiselle Edmée; a spacious country-house salon, hung

with Genoese linen, where Goncourt found his easy-chair in the same place as in other years, between the fireplace and the divan. At times, when an idea makes an impression upon him, he rises, walks back and forth two or three times, says what is in his mind or meditates on it, then resumes his seat, always in the same corner. Although very talkative, he has no chance to work himself up, for we have no dispute. A volume of verses recently published displays its flower-bedecked cover on the table. Goncourt makes a wry face as he spies it. We know that he has almost as intense a horror of poetry as of music. My wife, to punish him, compels him to listen to two or three pieces taken at random; and, when we unanimously expressed our admiration—

"It would be much finer in prose," says our friend, in whose eyes the most beautiful poetry in the world is not worth a page of the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, of Victor Hugo's *Choses Vues*, or ten lines of Joubert, Labruyère, Veuillot, or Vallès.

This name of Vallès, being casually mentioned in conversation, suggests the name of a collaborator on *La Rue*, a poor devil who disappeared a long while ago and from whom I received this very morning a heart-rending letter that would have brought tears to Inspector Javert's eyes.

"My brother and I knew him at Vichy, in the last days of the Empire," muses Goncourt aloud. "It was Vallès who introduced him to us. Later I undertook to write a preface for a book Char-

pentier was to publish for him, when we learned of the charming profession he was practising in addition to that of man of letters."

After a pause, he adds:

"All the same he had a fine touch, the brute! If you do anything for him, count me in."

When old friends like us begin to fan the flame of reminiscence, they never know when to stop. The clock on the little parish church near by strikes ten. Mademoiselle Edmée has left the salon long ago; now it is the grandmother's turn, then Lucien's, who takes the first train every morning because of his studio. Goncourt, as he says good-night to the tall youth whom he has known from his birth, asks him what they are doing at the studio, if they have a model at the moment.

"Yes, monsieur, a female model till the end of the week."

We glance at each other with a smile. Why, it was only yesterday that Goncourt, to amuse a little fellow of five years, mad over bright colors and daubing, drew up a commission on parchment, as in the days of Louis XV., the Well-Beloved, sealed with huge red seals, and countersigned Blanche Denis, daughter of Pélagie Denis, the excellent maid-servant at Auteuil — a commission constituting Lucien Daudet his little pastel artist! And now, the female model! What a magic lantern, this life! There are only three of us left in the salon. Another hour of intimate conversation, of reviving old memories. Men-

tioned Georges Brandès' visit to Champrosay, his keen comments upon Ibsen, Tolstoï, Turgénieff.

I. — You know that Brandès insists that the unkind allusions to you and me attributed to Turgénieff are pure invention.

GONCOURT. — He did not care for us, my boy. I have always felt certain of it, despite his Slavic cajolery.

MADAME DAUDET. — I had my suspicions too.

GONCOURT. — Turgénieff's antipathy was due to the fact that he was never able to understand your irony, nor my brother's. You disconcerted him. All foreigners are the same. French irony frightens them, they think people are making fun of them.

I. — Like working men and women and children. But what can be the matter with this Goncourt to-night, that he keeps us sitting up so late? Are we never going to bed, pray?

The lighted candles await us at the foot of the stairs. There is a shaking and kissing of hands, and we go up to our respective bedrooms. Goncourt's is above ours and of exactly the same size and shape, with a window looking on the orchard and the little church, another on the park, and two, in a large dressing-room, on the courtyard. As he walks about I can hear his footstep, the only thing which shows his age, because it does not realize that we are listening to it. I have told him that we can hear nothing. It is a heavy, tired step, as of one who has completed a hard day's work.

Sunday, July 12.

AT my study table an hour when Goncourt comes down from his room and takes me out for a turn in the garden. He has slept well enough for the first night in a strange bed, but complains of the heat, of a constant thirst which he attributes to the stormy weather, to this infernal month of July which brings on his liver complaint. The odor of the two tall silver lindens by the poultry-yard makes his head ache. We take another path, talking of the book on which I am at work and in which he seems interested.

"Ah! my boy, you are fortunate to be able to invent still."

"What keeps you from doing the same, Goncourt?"

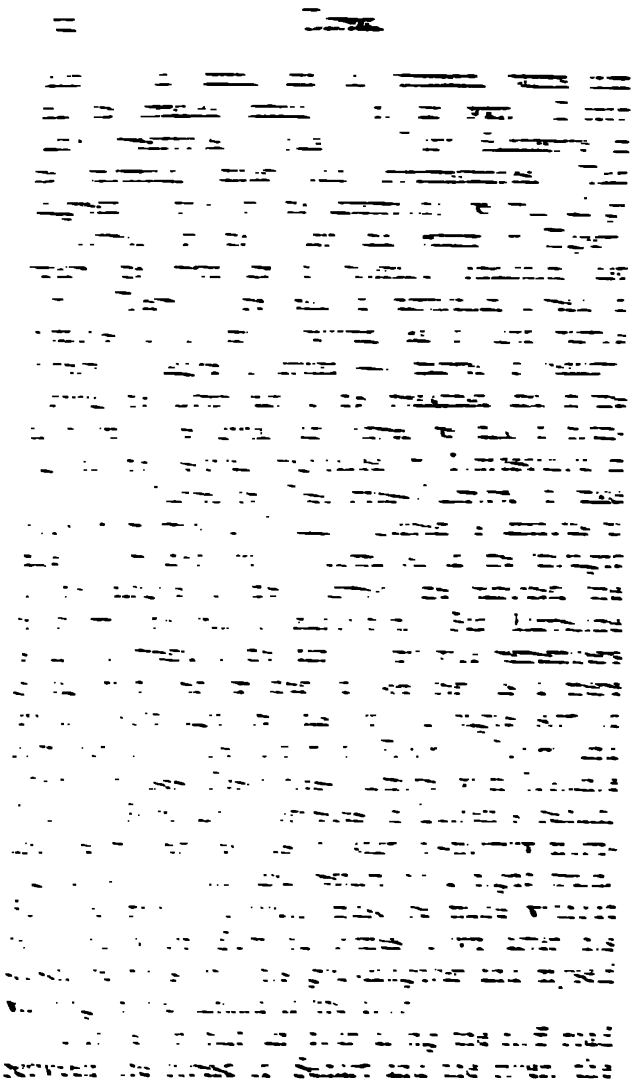
"Age," he says in a grave tone; "a man's imagination ceases to work when he 's as old as I am."

I remind him of Royer-Collard's remark: "M. de Talleyrand no longer invents, he describes his own sensations." But he seems not to hear me and looks about with a preoccupied air.

"What are you looking for, Goncourt?"

"The bench; you know, the bench where we used to sit to listen to your friend Mistral's verses. I noticed that there was always a breath of air there on the most suffocating days."

I lead him to the bench, and we do find there what Mistral would call a *breezelet*, which ascends from the river and stirs the leaves of a grove of young plane-trees on the slope in front of us.



road which runs through most of my books. A discussion of very long standing between us is taken up at a corner of the forest and accompanies us almost as far as Corbeil. Goncourt firmly believes in posterity; he has worked for posterity all his life; for my part, I never think about it, never imagine what it is like, have no clear idea what it is.

GONCOURT. — What do you write for, anyway? I know you well enough to know that money is not your motive.

I. — Nor renown. To be sure, success has always pleased me, although always dearly bought. But at no time of my life have I been tempted by the laurel wreath. To be a master, the leader of a school, an academician, president of anything under heaven, are things entirely without meaning in my eyes. I write simply for the pleasure of writing, because I feel that I must express my thoughts, because I am a man of keen sensibilities and a chatterbox.

GONCOURT. — Jules was a little like that.

I. — Do you remember one evening at Charpentier's, in the little salon — a dispute on this subject with Flaubert and Zola? I was alone in my opinion against you three, although at heart old Flaubert —

GONCOURT. — Oh! it 's a very ancient subject of dispute among artists. There 's a long correspondence thereon between Falconnet the sculptor and Diderot.

While we talk, Mademoiselle Edmée sits oppo-

site us, in a white butterfly hat, white dress and with a little white parasol, contending with the sun which has designs on her hawthorn-like complexion. At every bend in the road the sun changes its position, and however she seats herself the child always has a sunbeam in her eye or on the end of her little nose. Goncourt, with an umbrella twice as large, which he shifts impatiently from one shoulder to the other every moment, succeeds no better than his god-daughter in sheltering himself; he knows no more about the points of the compass than the child, and I reflect upon the large admixture of ingenuousness, of innocence in the character of this observer of men and things, this subtle mortal whom so many people accuse of cynicism and inhumanity. Ah! how little there is of the Goncourt of the popular imagination in the excellent man whom I watch as he feels in his pockets for sous to give the poor at Corbeil, as he goes into the pastry-cook's and into the bazaar on Rue Saint-Spire to buy a purse, a basket which Mademoiselle Edmée desires to present to her governess. The landau jolts noisily over the stones in the narrow streets which seem wider and wear a melancholy aspect on Sundays; the noise attracts people to windows and door-steps. We stop in front of the druggist's to buy the Vichy; and at a café on the square for Goncourt, who is dying of thirst. And while we are being served in the landau, he glances at the sleeping houses, the silent square, and mutters in dismay:

"Fancy being obliged to live here! It would be the death of me!"

I. — Of you, perhaps, because you 're a Parisian; but I was born in the provinces. With a home of my own, with love around my table, I should do very well.

GONCOURT. — How could you muster courage to write?

I. — Such work as yours would be impossible certainly; too many of the tools would be lacking. But Kant or Descartes might very well have written their books at Corbeil.

Recrossed the bridge, the Seine on fire; turned to the right through the fields of Tigéry, which slope down in gentle undulations to the forest, in the bright red light of the setting sun. The scene is even more bewitchingly beautiful than I had promised; but I feel that Goncourt admires without conviction, solely to be agreeable to me. This refined product of civilization prefers gardens to the country; and he admits as much to me as we go down from Étiolles, through that exquisite landscape in which his dear Madame de Pompadour lived, those sloping vineyards, of a pale green hue, and the old church-tower rising in the midst.

We return at twilight, just in time to hear the second dinner bell. Much animation around the table. Lucien is triumphant, thinking of the journey and the celebration of the next day. His mother, more and more alarmed at the prospect, tries to take back her word; but she has promised, sworn; she must celebrate.

"Ah! you like poetry, Madame Daudet," exclaims Goncourt with a hearty laugh; "very good! you 'll hear plenty of it."

She does not repine, but the idea of leaving her guest a whole day distresses her.

"Don't be afraid, I will take care of him and so will Edmée," says the grandmother.

For my part, I propose to give him my whole day. Ah! what hard things we will say to each other about the poor women! Goncourt looks forward to it as a holiday. Meanwhile, I notice that he does not eat; barely a little soup and a few strawberries. We shall not avoid the attack. Indeed, he has been like this every summer since he first had trouble with his liver. We have our usual evening session in the salon, cut a little short because of Madame Daudet's early start. Goncourt asks me for a book to take with him to his room. I suggest *Moscou en Flammes*, a passable Russian novel, full of typical details, which, with *War and Peace*, Stendhal's *Letters* and Castellane's *Journal*, completes the picture of that extraordinary episode of the imperial epic of which I am dreaming as the subject of a play for the Châtelet.

"How can one take any interest in countries so far away!" says the mistress of the house, with the little revolutionary air which she dissembles beneath a tranquil exterior. "It seems to me that those things must have happened two thousand years ago."

"Madame Daudet confuses duration and distance. Oh! these poets!" says Goncourt.

"She is right so far as to-morrow's celebration is concerned," adds her husband. "It 's a long way off and it will last a long while."

Upon that cruel jibe we rose and left the salon.

Monday, July 13.

THIS morning when I come downstairs, I am informed that Goncourt has slept poorly; he has taken his glass of Hauterive and requests that I do not go to his room. He will not come down until breakfast.

As he is not seriously ill, I think only of myself and my little disappointment. I had looked forward to a genuine debauch of strolling about on my *Grand's* arm and chattering. It is a fine day. A warm, pink mist rises from the terraces and lawns. It would be very pleasant in the little wood. Luckily the newspapers arrive, those devourers, those slaughterers of time; instead of pushing them aside, as I do on my working-days, I plunge into them bodily; my eyes and my brain are filled with their gray dust. Suddenly the door opens, Goncourt's tall form appears, reaching the lintel. He cannot sleep, so preferred to dress and come downstairs. I watch him as he reads the newspapers, sitting on the divan on the other side of my table; his features are drawn and his eyes yellow. Usually when he has read a sheet, *swept it with his eye*, as he says, he throws it on the floor or on the couch by his side, all unfolded. To-day I am impressed by the care with which he folds each

paper and lays it on the table. I mention the subject.

"I saw that it annoyed you, my boy," he says, with a kindly smile which covers me with confusion.

Ah! pitiful creatures that we are, how cunning is stupidity, how it worms itself into the closest, most affectionate relations! It is true that all that paper scattered on the floor, around my table, grated on my nerves; but to think that I could not conceal my impatience from him!

"Shall we take a walk? There 's nothing in the papers this morning."

He has risen, put his arm through mine, and instantly, from his gait, from the tone of his voice, I understand that *there is something in the papers.* Doubtless a line, a sentence on the subject of the Academy.

GONCOURT. — Do you know when the election to fill Dumas's chair is to be?

"October, I have been told, or November. Perhaps even later."

After a few steps he resumes with an effort:

"Are — are you to be a candidate, my boy?"

"If I were to be a candidate, Goncourt, you would be the first to know it."

"What pleasure you give me!" he says, pressing my arm.

We arrive at his bench, the one he prefers this year, and, having seated himself, he continues:

"What can you expect? After a while these newspaper scandal-mongers make an impression

on one. You cannot help it. They insist upon it that you have written your letter to the Academy, with a request that it be kept secret until the election."

"And you were not angry with me?"

Goncourt, seeking a breath of air in which to hold his burning hands, turns affectionately to me.

"Remember what I said to you ten or twelve years ago, when there was some talk of your being chosen. You were already a member of my Academy, even then; but I urged you, and with perfect sincerity, to follow your own inclinations. I still adhere to that. When I was assured that you would come forward as a candidate for Dumas's chair, I was deeply hurt, but I remained your friend, indeed I realized more than ever how dear you were to me."

"And yet you must have known that, when you had made me the executor of your will and entrusted to me the foundation of your Academy, I would not abandon my post without advising you?"

The fact is that one day, some four or five years ago, when Goncourt was not feeling well, he sent for me to come to Auteuil and inflicted upon me the cruel emotion of reading to him, aloud, a testament in which I was named as executor, jointly with Henri Céard. Subsequently the bungling of a reporter having banished Céard from the house at Auteuil, my son Léon had been substituted for him as executor of our friend's last wishes. In that document, whose contents were

known to none but the notary and myself, I first saw the statutes and regulations of the Académie des Goncourts. Is it because of the criticisms I made concerning this Academy, the title of which seemed to me a very grave mistake, that he does not care to say much to me about it? I myself am not particularly anxious to discuss it, feeling certain that I shall never be called upon to take any steps with regard to it, as I shall die long before Goncourt. That is evidently his conviction too, as he has associated with me in the undertaking, in the first place Henri Céard, then my son Léon, and quite lately — so I am told — Léon Hennique in my son's place. Why this constant changing? I have no idea. He has always manifested the liveliest affection for Léon, and the last volume of his journal testifies to his appreciation of the boy's talent. He told me two years ago that Léon was one of the Ten. What is the explanation of this change? I shall know one day or another. This is almost exactly what he said to me to-day concerning his Academy. When I asked him if he still clung to the same title, he answered earnestly:

"Yes, my boy; no doubt the word is too solemn for us and is hardly suitable for independent writers, some of whom indeed are soldiers of the vanguard, carrying their weapons as they choose and their tunics over the shoulder. I have thought about changing our title, as you wished me to do, in the direction of simplicity, of good fellowship; I have thought of the *Table des Gon-*

court, the *Prix des Goncourt;* but a scruple has always held me back. My brother and I evolved this idea together; we both worked at the foundation of the Académie des Goncourt; and I do not consider that I alone have the right to change the decisions at which we two arrived. Ah! if Jules were still living, we should have to modify many articles. The course of the other Academy has changed of late years; it has tended more toward youth, toward LITERATURE, as Flaubert used to say; the proof of what I say is that Bourget, Loti and many others were on the list of our foundation before they joined the other, some of them without their own knowledge. For all that, the greater part of the prizes distributed at the Palais Mazarin have no justification. Their Academy either does n't know how to discover talent or does n't take the trouble; often, indeed, it cannot; and our prize of five thousand francs will render noteworthy service. There! Now, let us walk a little."

We walk down the curé's path, and return through the little wood, and all the time he talks about his brother: —

"It 's a strange thing: Jules died in 1870, and for fifteen years, down to 1885, I, who am a great dreamer, never had a dream in which he did not figure. Suddenly he disappeared from my dreams. During the day I thought of him constantly, his memory haunted me as persistently as before, but in my dreams, in my night life, he no longer existed. And that lasted ten years. One night

last year my brother returned. I dreamed some silly thing or other, but Jules was in it, and since then he has never failed to appear. Last night again he was with me in my dream."

He said no more. Our steps grated on the gravel, hot with the noon-day sun. In front of the house, in the tall sycamore which rises above the roof on his side of the house and mine, a finch or linnet sang in a whisper, as if half asleep.

"What is that bird?" he asked. "I hear him against my window in the morning. He wakes me, puffing out his little throat, in which the air seems to be mingled with fresh water."

"In the morning about four o'clock. I hear him, too, in my curtains."

And I tell him the story of the blacksmith at the Bellechasse barracks, whom my neighbor Doctor Charcot and I used to hear every morning, each in his study, and whose forge hammer, like a medium of transmission between our brains, beat time for our twofold task, and made us think of each other. "'Which of us will be the last to hear the smith's hammer?' Charcot often said to me, with his stern eye and sweet smile."

"He believed that it would be he," replies Goncourt, to whom I must have told this little anecdote many times; but he makes no sign.

When two persons are and have long been in the habit of seeing each other often, it is hard to avoid such repetitions. And he, dear old fellow, always begins his stories with: "You will accuse me of repeating myself."

At breakfast that morning there was no repetition of old stories. A small party, but very lively. We talked of the travellers who left Champrosay at daybreak. Where are they now? Taking refreshment in some sub-prefecture to the strains of the local band. Madame Desbordes-Valmore's name led us to Verlaine's, and to the influence which the gentle Marceline's genius exerted upon that refined imp of Satan. Madame A., who has known them both but not at the same time, evokes for us poor Lélian's figure, still a mere boy, when he recited in Madame la Générale de Ricard's salons his pretty Saturnian verses: —

"*Et nous n'aurons jamais de Béatrice.*"

She who was destined to be his posthumous Béatrice died long ago.

I, *abruptly.* — Goncourt, what 's the matter with you? You are not eating.

GONCOURT. — I am not hungry, my boy. If I am very good may I not have a little milk from the cow my god-daughter says is so naughty? Not boiled, but with the chill just taken off?

A large bowl is placed before him, but he finds it too hot, and eventually leaves it and the table, wondering what would taste good. After his nap he comes down, much rested, with less yellow in his eyes. I suggest that we order the horses for a long drive in the forest or in the open country. We can go by the rose-fields of Mandres to bid Coppée *bonjour*, or to taste the delicious Mennecy biscuit beyond the plains of Lisses and Cour-

tourmente. But neither suggestion tempts him. It would keep him too long in the carriage: he can no longer endure drives four or five hours long as on the day when Madame Daudet, a copy of the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* under her arm, drove us through the streets of Savigny, looking for Henri IV.'s road and the house of Madame de Beaumont, Chateaubriand's friend.

"Suppose we just go and sit by the river? What do you say to that, master?"

At Champrosay he frequently calls me "master" (*patron*), everywhere else "Daudet" or "little one" (*mon petit*), sometimes "Alphonse," but only when he speaks of me.

"The river it is."

But a forgotten gate-key prevents our going to the Seine, and we remain in the curé's path, which the setting sun, intersected by dense lindens, spatters with patches of light.

I. — Then it is true that you don't propose to work any more, Goncourt? Do you think that will be possible?

GONCOURT. — I intend to finish my history of the Camargo, and then to make a very minute catalogue of the collections not included in the *Maison d'un Artiste*. If Antoine produces *La Faustin* for me, I shall revise a few scenes. And then — and then, that 's all. There is nothing but my journal that I should have taken any pleasure in doing. That noting down the events of life, so varied yet so simple, interests me more than novel-writing. It 's not so with you; I know it.

I. — I am too much of a Latin, I like things with more construction. For instance, take the majority of Dostoiewski's books, even the *Karamazoff Brothers* and the *House of the Dead.* I was hardly able to finish them; they are not *arranged* enough. It 's not my fault, my dear fellow. When I was a boy, I played morris under the gate of Augustus, and marbles in the Arenas or on the steps of the Temple of Diana.

At this point a load of hay passes along the communal road between the second park and the path where we are walking. An old peasant, bare-headed — a round head covered with white hair — who is driving the wagon, salutes me through the fence, and I shout to him: —

"*Bonjour*, Père Jean!"

When Eugène Delacroix lived at Champrosay, this man was in his service. You should hear him say, proudly: "I used to fix *Monsieur Lacroué's* palette." And Goncourt begins to discourse upon Eugène Delacroix's palette, with such learning and energy. To what a unique and rare conference upon romantic art I have the privilege of listening! how I bless Père Jean, to whose chance passing I owe this windfall! Remain in the park talking delightfully of coloring and light and shade until the dinner-hour. Return through the little wood and the kitchen-garden, where the flowers are panting in the scorching, perfume-laden twilight.

Dinner decidedly depressing. Mademoiselle Edmée is not accustomed to passing a whole day

apart from her mother. For my own part, it seems to me that three empty places at the table are a good many. We remain a moment on the veranda. The sky is black; a last trace of light lingers on the gravelled paths. From the direction of Versailles, through what is called the Gap of Savigny, come tempestuous puffs, muffled rumblings. I am in a most melancholy mood.

"Well, little one," says Goncourt, taking his place by the fireplace, "I have often felt just as you feel now, when walking in my garden at Auteuil. But you are not alone here and it 's only for a single evening, while I have only my collections for company, from one end of the year to the other. They are cold, I tell you, and they don't speak to one every day."

The sincere and heart-broken tone in which he confides to me his unhappiness as a bachelor gives me much pain. I am angry with myself for giving way to this attack of depression, and I pass the evening leading him to talk about his brother, about Jeand'heurs' periwinkles, the evenings at Saint-Gratien in the old days, with Théophile Gautier and the Girauds, and also about our insanely merry parties in Provence, at the Parrocels'. At ten o'clock, when we leave the salon, we are no longer melancholy; I have warmed myself by rubbing him.

Before going upstairs, Goncourt, candle in hand, comes and leans on my table, at which I have settled myself to work and await the return of our travellers by the night train.

"I hate to leave you alone," he says, with his kindly, big brother's smile. "I would have liked to sit up with you; but I feel so tired!"

He goes away, dragging his feet, and I hear him ascending the stairs slowly.

Tuesday, July 14.

"I SAY, little one —"

It is he calling me, in a whisper, as I leave my bedroom, and leaning over the rail at the top of that terrible second flight, which I can only master now with great difficulty.

"I have slept poorly, little one. I am going to pass my day in bed, trying a milk cure. Then a bath on top of it, to-morrow morning, and I shall be quite on my feet again, I am sure."

I am not so sure of it as he is. Milk would be good for him if taken persistently and for a long time; but what troubles my wife and myself above all else is this bath that he asks us to give him to-morrow morning. Goncourt has no bath-room in his own house at Auteuil; or, if he has, it is overrun, like the whole house, by curios and glass-cases. They place a tub in the kitchen and empty it out of the window, so that it disarranges and tires the whole household. And of what would not this Goncourt of the haughty bearing, who is reputed to be an egotist, and who goes down to the door in mid-winter, hardly dressed, to get his newspaper, rather than wake anybody — of what, I say, would he not deprive himself, in face of the thought that his servants might be put to some extra trouble?

Every summer, when he comes to Champrosay, the bath-room is his great delight. He goes into raptures over everything, the hot water, the shower-bath. Unluckily he had a chill there one day, two or three years ago; an attack of fever followed, and ever since we have been very much afraid. But what are we to do? Last year we offended him by postponing the wretched bath. But, who knows? Perhaps he will change his mind between now and to-morrow, perhaps he will feel better. My wife and Lucien, who have been up to see him, found him in good spirits; he made them tell him about the celebration at Douai, the fête of the *Gayants*, the polished addresses of Montesquiou and Anatole France. Several times during the day he sent messages to me.

At dinner we have a guest, a Parisian who has fled from the national holiday. Pass the evening on the terrace. Lowering weather, with a high wind. On the horizon in every direction distant music and fireworks. Goncourt, lying in his bed upstairs, must hear them, brought to his ears by this storm-boding wind, which he abhors.

Wednesday, July 15.

EBNER, my secretary, whose time is so fully occupied on the *Officiel* that he can give me only one day in each week, has come to work with me. We put our shoulders to the wheel in good season. The weather is as it threatened to be: low-hanging, stormy clouds, leaves whirling about as

in autumn. Bad weather for Goncourt's bath. This thought suddenly passes through my mind. The servant, when I question him, assures me that everything has been prepared with the greatest care, under Madame's superintendence; moderate temperature, his linen in the thoroughly warmed drying-box. Monsieur Goncourt came down to the bath-room about twenty minutes ago, after passing a very good night. He intends to remain in the water an hour. An hour is too much. I go to the bath-room door.

"Is that you, little one?"

He answers my knock from his bath-tub.

"How are you? I mean to come down and see you when I have had my bath."

"No, my Goncourt, don't come down. You would risk taking a chill in the halls. Do you hear how the wind blows? Go up and bury yourself in the bed-clothes for a while. I will come right up and bid you good-morning. I have Ebner's arm to-day, so I 'm not afraid of the stairs."

"Faith, nothing would suit me better than to go back to bed for a few moments. I feel so weak. I have n't spunk enough even to look at my watch, which is here on a chair by my side. What time is it, Ebner? I will stay here another quarter of an hour. You think it 's too much? Very good. Perhaps you are right. Send your man to me and I will go upstairs."

Half an hour later I knocked at his bedroom door.

"Come in!" it was his voice, but so changed, with such a far-away sound.

We found him stretched, thrown rather, across his bed, half-dressed, as if he had not had strength to go back to bed when he came up from his bath. The curtains were raised at both windows, admitting the daylight unsoftened, a sort of light that he detests. He complained of a pain in his right side, accompanied by a terrible shivering and cold feet. It was the expected attack of his liver trouble. Oh! he recognized it. And in order that I might not be alarmed, he exerted himself to smile, his teeth chattering all the while. Ebner assisted him to crawl under the bed-clothes. He asked for a glass of Hauterive, and two or three times he failed to find the word he wanted: he said "Fasquelle" for "bottle"; but he noticed it at once, and was the first to laugh at his blunders. We observed that "Fasquelle" resembled *fiasque, fiasquette,* the name of the bottle in a wicker case used in the south. Once in bed, under the heavy coverlet, with his curtains tightly drawn, he felt better; the shivering subsided, and his hands were not so hot.

"And the pain in your side, Goncourt?"

"Very bearable. If it increases, I will ask you to give me a prick."

Two years ago, during a very painful attack, one or two injections of morphine had relieved him greatly, but he had never had it injected since and had never done it himself.

"What hard luck, little one," he said, taking

my hand affectionately, "what hard luck always to bring sickness to your house, as if your own suffering were not enough! However, you must take me with all my drawbacks, for I have no one but you, you are my family, my real family."

"Dear friend!"

We talk a moment beside his bed; then he asks us to let him sleep. He did not believe that he could come down to breakfast, but would certainly dine with us.

About one o'clock or half-past one, as I was about returning to my work, Goncourt sent to ask me to come up, saying that he needed me. When he saw me, he began to laugh.

"The dentist's reception-room. When the time comes for me to have my tooth out, the pain stops. I thought I must have a little prick, but the mere sight of you — "

"I will wait, my dear fellow, I am in no hurry."

I sit down on the couch, facing his bed, in the light half-shadow in which his room is bathed as at the hour for the afternoon siesta, and we talk about the fête at Douai, of which Lucien has given him all the details, also about our dinner-party on the next day, Thursday. These Thursdays at Champrosay, the open house, the dinners at which there are sometimes twenty-five people around a leg of mutton and a chowder, the unexpected arrivals, and the terrified excitement of the servants, contrasted with the coolness and ingenious expedients of the mistress of the house, amuse him beyond measure. It is his delight to

remain in the salon in the evening, when all the Parisians have gone, and to sip a petit-verre of neat brandy as he recalls words, attitudes, a curl of the lip — so many notes for his journal.

"What a pity that your journal is closed, my Goncourt. There will be crowds here to-morrow, and you would have had copy galore."

"At all events, master, I promise to be here, and to do you credit. I feel better now; I shall not even need a prick."

Those were the last words he ever said to me.

An hour later Madame Daudet knocked at his door. Alarmed by his silence, she entered the room. He seemed to be dozing, but his hands and fingers were moving restlessly as was customary with him in animated conversation, a discussion concerning art.

She speaks to him: —

"How are you, Monsieur de Goncourt?"

"Better, better."

His words come jerkily, his glance is far away. My wife, in dismay, goes to fetch her mother and returns with her to our friend, whose eyes are now closed, his face a deep purple, his breathing labored and stertorous.

For a long time I refuse to believe that it is anything serious.

"It 's his liver," I say. "He knows what it is, he just told us."

Ebner, who has been upstairs again at my request, confirms me in my illusion.

"The ladies are mistaken, monsieur, I assure

you. M. de Goncourt is just as we saw him a little while ago, no worse."

But my wife insists, she waxes warm on the subject: —

"I tell you that your friend is very ill. You did n't see him as we just saw him, or you would be as frightened as we are. Send a telegram for Doctor Barié at once, Ebner, I beg you."

Among the numerous physicians who have attended Edmond de Goncourt of late years, Doctors Millard, Rendu, Martin, Vaquez, Barié, he has always had most confidence in the last-named; he has often told us so, and has written it in his journal. And so, when the carriage arrived, about six o'clock, with Lucien and the doctor, we experienced a feeling of genuine relief.

. . . . . .

"Well, Monsieur Barié?"

"Congestion of the lungs. At his age it 's a very serious matter."

Even in face of this positive statement, this certainty, I was not afraid. It did not seem possible to me. For that shivering which he recognized —

"Was a shiver of fever — a hundred and twenty pulsations a minute. But the fever does n't come from the liver, it 's the lung that is attacked."

"Did he take cold coming out of the bath?"

"Yes, perhaps it was the bath — or perhaps a disease that was lying hidden. You say that he was feverish every day. He coughed a good deal last month and complained laughingly of having

a wardrobe on his chest and a litter of kittens miaouwing in his bronchial tubes. He must have been ill some time."

All the same there is in this explosion of danger a suddenness which passes my comprehension. To think that only a moment ago he was talking and laughing with me! Now his eyes look without seeing, and when, by applying mustard plasters all over his body and by injecting ether, caffeine, all the most powerful reagents, they succeed in restoring him partially to life, his voice is no more than a distant stammering, painful to hear. Barié raises him for a moment to a sitting posture.

"Come, Monsieur de Goncourt," says the good doctor, shaking him gently, "talk to us a little. Do you know where you are? At Champrosay, with your friends the Daudets; do you know them?"

The poor fellow smiled for the last time, with a movement of the head which seemed to say: "I should think I do know them." Almost immediately he fell back exhausted on the pillow, muttering: —

"Very tired, very tired."

What happened then? There is a dark hole in my memory, dark with that depressing darkness which invades a house with grief, and which no light can dissipate. On such evenings the lamps give no light. We talk low and grope our way about. Should we send for Pélagie, who is accustomed to take care of him? No. He has

forbidden her to leave the house at Auteuil, he trusts no one else to look after his papers and collections. Especially at this time, when the roof is off, and the house full of workmen. How excited he would be to see her here when he recovers consciousness; for not one of us, not even the doctor, has dreamed of disaster. Barié, observing our grief, encourages us:

"We will pull him through — surely if there 's no congestion of the brain."

But Madame Daudet is right in suggesting that as a measure of precaution we should notify the family.

Where is the family to be found? We know nothing about it; he mentioned the subject so seldom. His cousins the Ratiers at the Château de Jeand'heurs, Lefebvre de Béhaine, brother-in-law of our friend Frédéric Masson, are the only ones whose names and addresses we have at hand. We send telegrams to them and a messenger to Doctor Fort, the physician at Draveil, an excellent man and careful practitioner, who is to come to receive Barié's instructions and relieve him until to-morrow morning.

In the silence and darkness of the country there is a constant going and coming and rumbling of wheels as on the liveliest Thursdays at Champrosay. At eleven o'clock the doctor from Paris goes away, promising to return to-morrow as soon as he has made his visit to the hospital. He has installed his colleague upstairs beside the patient, whom my wife has just seen — still

drowsy and feverish, but calm. He has drunk twice, trying to smile to reassure us and muttering that he is better, much better. Nothing to do now but go to bed, while the doctor keeps vigil overhead, ready to call us at the slightest cause for alarm. I go out on the terrace for a moment. The wind is blowing, sweeping a cloudy sky saturated with storm. The trees in the park stand out a velvety mass as in the *eaux-fortes* of Seymour Haden whom Goncourt taught me to love. Poor fellow! Is this the beginning of a long illness? Are we to be subjected to more weeks of trembling anxiety and suspense, when we have hardly recovered from our intense suffering on account of our child? What a year, what trials! However, let us not cry out, let us not complain, so that *no one may know how we suffer.* That is the best way of cheating evil destiny.

Thursday, July 16.

THE clock on the little church at Champrosay has struck twelve times. Everybody in the house is asleep except the physician and myself. Like Macbeth, I have murdered sleep for several years past, and I take a dose of chloral every night. To-night I delay taking it, not that I have any evil presentiments, but the doctor's footsteps over my head engross my thoughts; I follow him to and fro, I see him approach the bed, lean over the sick man, return to the couch, where he stretches himself out and which he suddenly leaves again.

What is the matter? No, it is nothing. And yet, if — Some one is coming downstairs. Oh! the agony of that stealthy step, which comes nearer and nearer. Some one knocks and says in a low tone:

"The doctor wishes Madame to come upstairs at once."

The voice whispers again, still lower:

"Monsieur had better come too. Monsieur de Goncourt is very ill."

What mysterious nervous strength placed me on my feet, dressed in a twinkling, and carried me to the top of that flight of stairs which ordinarily it is almost impossible for me to ascend? His door is ajar, and his breath, a loud breath horrible to hear — of a sort that I have heard on other nights, alas! — reaches my ears in the hall. Is it possible? Can it really be he that I hear? It was he. He was in the death agony, his features motionless, his face bloated and as it were magnified, his beautiful white hair lying like damp silk on the pillow. A moment of frantic grief and terror. I question the doctor. What in heaven's name has happened? Nothing. The night did not begin badly, but suddenly the pulse quickened, the flesh became hotter, the face even more inflamed. Thus far they had been able to make him drink, but now it was impossible, nothing would pass his lips. This is the end. The doctor tries another injection of ether to satisfy us. No, any sort of effort is useless, almost a profanation; the agony has begun. All about

us, in this bedroom of his where everything is usually so clean and so orderly, the confusion of death is perceptible already. This doctor, who unconsciously talks aloud, these open drawers, these phials and cups on the table, where sheets of paper covered with his fine, even writing are still lying about. And still that stertorous breathing, interrupted at intervals, then resumed, but shorter and more distant after each break, as that noble mind, that enlightened soul recedes into the darkness. My wife kneels at the foot of the bed, praying and weeping; I, knowing no prayers, have taken his hand in mine — poor hand! all moist, yet burning hot — and, leaning over him, my tears mingling with his death-sweat, I speak to him, very low, close to his ear:

"Goncourt, my dear fellow, it is I. I am here, close to you."

I do not know if he can hear me, but at times I fancy that he can, when the loud breathing stops and his beautiful face with its heavy, drooping eyelids seems to listen to what I say of his brother, his brother Jules, whom he loves above all else. Suddenly his hand, the scorching heat of which has sensibly abated within a few moments — his hand is withdrawn from mine, hastily, almost roughly. The death agony, it seems, is marked by such spasmodic movements. To me it was like a hurried departure, when a friend is pressed for time and abruptly tears himself away from your farewells. Ah! Goncourt, faithful and loyal comrade!

How long did we sit beside that death-bed? What time was it when, the tapers being lighted and a rosary placed by his loving friend, my wife, in his beautiful lifeless hands, we returned to our own room, crushed and stupefied with grief? I cannot tell. I know that a ray of dawn was whitening the windows, that I pounced on my chloral like a coward, and that, as I fell asleep, I heard Lucien sobbing in his room below. Two hours later I was awakened by the little bird in the tree near by, Goncourt's bird with his throat swollen with fresh water, whose innocent trills arose joyously in the sunlight. I lay for a moment without thinking, without understanding; and feeling came back to me with memory, cruel memory, when I heard my wife, in a voice broken with tears, ordering the gardener to "cut tall green palms and roses, armfuls of roses, all the roses in the garden."

CHAMPROSAY, Wednesday, August 5, the day of the burial.

ARTISTS' WIVES.

ARTISTS' WIVES.

PROLOGUE.

TWO friends, a poet and a painter, stretched out upon a broad studio divan, cigar in mouth, were talking together one evening after dinner.

It was the hour of expansiveness, of confidences. The lamp shone softly beneath its shade, its circle of light guarding the privacy of the conversation and making it difficult to distinguish the fanciful magnificence of the high walls, crowded with pictures, stands of arms, hangings, and ending at the top in a skylight through which the dark blue sky could be plainly seen.

A portrait of a lady, bending forward slightly as if to listen, alone stood partly forth from the shadow, — a young lady, with intelligent eyes, a serious, kindly mouth and a bright smile which seemed to defend her husband's easel against fools and discouraging friends. A low chair moved back from the fire and two tiny blue shoes lying on the carpet indicated the presence of a child in the house; and, in fact, from the adjoining room, where the mother and her baby had just disappeared, came bursts of

rippling laughter, soft murmurings, and all the charming tumult of a nest preparing for sleep. All these things combined to permeate that artistic fireside with a perfume of family happiness which the poet inhaled with delight.

"There is no doubt about it, my dear fellow," he said to his friend, "you have done the right thing. There is only one way to be happy. This is happiness, this and nothing else. You must find me a wife."

THE PAINTER.

Faith! no, not if I know myself! Find a wife for yourself if you 're bent on it. For my part I 'll have nothing to do with it.

THE POET.

Why not, pray?

THE PAINTER.

Because — because artists ought not to marry.

THE POET.

This is a little too much. You dare to say that in this room, and the lamp does n't suddenly go out, the walls do not fall on your head! Why, just think, you wretch, that you have been for two hours exhibiting to me and making me long for this happiness which you forbid me to seek. In God's name, are you like one of those wicked rich men whose pleasure is increased tenfold by the sufferings of other people, and who enjoy their own chimney corner the more when they think that it rains out-of-doors and that there are some poor devils without a roof to shelter them?

THE PAINTER.

Think what you choose of me. I am too fond of you to help you to make a fool of yourself, irreparably.

THE POET.

Come, come! What does this mean? Are n't you satisfied? Why, it seems to me that one inhales happiness here as freely as one inhales the free air of heaven at an open window in the country.

THE PAINTER.

You are right. I am happy, perfectly happy. I love my wife with all my heart. When I think of my child, I laugh with pure delight. Marriage has been to me a harbor where the water is calm and safe, not of the sort in which one makes fast to a ring on the shore at the risk of lying there and rusting forever, but one of those little blue coves in which one repairs sails and spars for new voyages to unknown lands. I have never worked so well as since my marriage, and my best pictures have all been painted since then.

THE POET.

Well, then, what in the devil —

THE PAINTER.

My dear fellow, at the risk of making myself appear a conceited idiot, I will tell you that I consider my good fortune a sort of miracle, something abnormal and exceptional. Yes, the more clearly I see what marriage is, the more appalled I am at my

own luck. I am like the man who has passed through a great peril without discovering or suspecting it, and who trembles when it is all over, stupefied by his own audacity.

THE POET.

But what are these terrible perils?

THE PAINTER.

The first and greatest of all is the danger of losing one's talent, of going backward. That is a matter of some importance to an artist, I presume. For observe that I am not now speaking of the ordinary conditions of life. I agree that in general marriage is an excellent thing, and that most men do not begin to amount to anything until the family puts the finishing touches to them or increases their stature. Often, indeed, it is a professional necessity. A bachelor notary is inconceivable. He would not have the sedate, portly bearing. But for all of us — poets, painters, sculptors, musicians — who live outside of life, engaged solely in studying it, in reproducing it, and keeping always a short distance away from it, as one steps back from a picture in order to see it better, — for us, I say, marriage is advisable only in exceptional cases. The nervous, exacting, impressionable creature, the man-child whom people call an artist, requires a special type of woman, almost impossible to find, and the surest way is not to seek it. Ah! how well Delacroix, the great Delacroix whom you admire so much, understood that! What a beautiful life he

led, bounded by the walls of his studio, devoted exclusively to art! I was looking at his cottage at Champrosay the other day, and that little garden, like some country curé's, filled with roses, where he walked all alone for twenty years! The place has the tranquillity and narrow limits of celibacy. But just imagine Delacroix married, a paterfamilias, worrying about children to bring up, money and sickness; do you think his work would have been what it was?

THE POET.

You cite Delacroix, I reply with Victor Hugo. Do you think that marriage was any obstacle to him in writing so many admirable books?

THE PAINTER.

I think that marriage was not an obstacle to him in any respect. But all husbands have not the genius to obtain forgiveness, nor a great sun of glory to dry the tears they cause to flow. Moreover it must be amusing to be the wife of a man of genius. There are roadmenders' wives who are happier.

THE POET.

It's a curious thing, upon my word, to hear this argument against marriage from a married man who is happy in his marriage.

THE PAINTER.

I tell you again that what I say is not based on my own experience. My opinion is formed from all the sad sights I have seen elsewhere, from all the

misunderstandings which are so frequent in artists' households, caused by our abnormal lives and nothing else. Look at that sculptor, who, in the prime of life, and just when his talent has reached its fullest maturity, has expatriated himself, left his wife and children to shift for themselves. Public opinion has condemned him, and I certainly shall not make excuses for him. And yet how well I can understand how he was driven to that step! There was a fellow who adored his art, who had a perfect horror of society and of social relations. His wife, albeit a good-hearted and intelligent woman, instead of removing him from surroundings which were uncongenial to him, condemned him for ten years to comply with social obligations of all sorts. In like manner she forced him to make a lot of official busts, stupid worthies in velvet caps, overdressed women utterly devoid of charm; she interrupted him ten times a day to receive unwelcome callers, and every evening laid out his dress suit and light gloves and dragged him from salon to salon. You will say that he should have rebelled, should have answered squarely, "No!" But don't you know that the very fact that our lives are so sedentary makes us more dependent than other men on our fireside? The air of the house envelops us, and unless a suggestion of the ideal is mingled with it, it dulls our faculties and soon fatigues us. Moreover the artist, as a general rule, puts all the force and energy he possesses into his work, and after his solitary, patient struggles finds himself without

strength of will to contend with the trivial annoyances of life. With him feminine tyranny has an easy time. No other class of men is so easily subdued, conquered. But beware! He must not be made to feel the yoke too heavily. If it happens some day that the invisible bonds by which he is cunningly held captive are drawn a little too tight, if they impede his artistic efforts, he will break them all at a single blow, distrusting his own weakness, and fly, like our sculptor, beyond the mountains.

His wife was utterly astounded by his desertion. The poor soul is still asking herself, "What did I do to him?" Nothing. She did n't understand him. For to be a real helpmeet to an artist it is not enough to be good-hearted and intelligent. A woman must have unlimited tact, must be able to sacrifice herself with a smiling face; and it is a miraculous thing to find those qualities in a young woman, who is ignorant of life and curious about it. She is pretty, she has married a man who is well-known and received everywhere. Damnation! of course she likes to be seen hanging on his arm. Is n't that natural enough? The husband, on the other hand, who has become more of a savage since he has been working more successfully, and finds the days too short and the task unpleasant, refuses to exhibit himself. They are both unhappy, and whether the man yields or resists, his life is thenceforth deranged, diverted from its tranquil current. Ah! how many of those ill-assorted couples I have known, where the wife was some-

times executioner, sometimes victim, oftener executioner than victim, and almost always without suspecting it! Why, the other evening, I was at Dargenty, the composer's. We begged him to play us something. He had hardly begun one of those pretty mazurkas with variations, which entitle him to be called Chopin's heir, when his wife began to talk, at first in an undertone, then a little louder. The conversation spread from one to another. In a moment nobody but myself was listening. Thereupon he closed the piano and said to me with a smile, but with a distressed air: "It 's always like that here — my wife does n't care for music." Can you imagine anything more terrible? Think of marrying a woman who does n't care for your art! Nay, take my advice, my dear fellow, and don't marry. You are alone, you are free. Cling jealously to your solitude and your freedom

. . .

THE POET.

Parbleu! you talk very airily about solitude. A few moments hence, when I have gone, if an artistic idea comes into your mind, you will calmly work it out beside your dying fire, without feeling all about you that atmosphere of isolation, so vast, so empty that inspiration evaporates and vanishes therein. But assuming for a moment that it is well to be alone in one's hours for work — there are moments of weariness, of discouragement, when one is doubtful of one's self, of one's art. At such moments it must be a blessed thing to have beside

you, always faithful and ready, a loving heart into which you can pour out your chagrin, with no fear of disturbing a confidence, an enthusiastic admiration that are unalterable. And the child — is not that baby smile, appearing constantly and without cause, the best moral rejuvenation a man can have? Ah! I have often thought of that. To us artists, vain like all those who live on success, on that superficial, capricious, fickle esteem which is called *vogue* — to us above all men children are indispensable. They alone can console us for growing old. All that we lose the child gains. If we have failed to achieve success, we say to ourselves, "He will succeed;" and, as our own hair vanishes, we have the joy of watching it grow again, curly, and golden, and vigorous, on a fair little head by our side.

THE PAINTER.

Ah! poet, poet — have you thought too of all the mouthfuls one must stick on the end of a pen or a brush, to feed a brood?

THE POET.

Nay, say what you will, the artist is made for domestic life; and that is so true that those of us who do not marry put up with second-hand households, like those travellers who, tired of being always without a fixed abode, install themselves finally in a lodging-house chamber and pass their lives under the spell of the vulgar sign: "Rooms by the day or month."

THE PAINTER.

They make a great mistake. They subject themselves to all the annoyances of married life and never know its joys.

THE POET.

You admit, then, that it has some joys?

At this point the painter, instead of replying, rose, turned over a mass of drawings and sketches until he found a crumpled parcel of manuscript, then returned to his companion.

"We might discuss this subject a long while," he said, "without convincing each other. But since you are determined to make a trial of marriage, in spite of my observations, I urge you to read this little work. It was written — mark what I say — by a married man, very much in love with his wife, very happy in his home, — a man of an inquisitive turn of mind, who, as he passes his life among artists, has amused himself by sketching some of the households of which I was speaking just now. From the first line to the last this book is true, so true that the author has never cared to print it. Read it, and come and see me when you have read it. I fancy you will have changed your ideas."

The poet took the package and carried it home; but he did not take proper care of it, for I have been able to detach a few leaves from the little book, and I now boldly offer them to the public.

I.

MADAME HEURTEBISE.

SHE certainly was not made to marry an artist, especially that terrible, passionate, tumultuous, exuberant fellow, who went about in the world with his nose in the air and bristling moustache, bearing with a swagger, as a challenge to all absurd conventions, to all bourgeois prejudices, his strange and mettlesome name of Heurtebise. How, by what miracle, did that little woman, reared in a jeweller's shop, behind rows of watch-chains and rings hung on a cord, succeed in fascinating that poet?

Imagine the charms of a shop-girl, — characterless features, cold eyes always smiling, a placid, good-natured countenance, no genuine refinement, but a certain fondness for tinsel and glitter, which she had acquired doubtless in her father's shop, and which caused her to affect bows of multi-colored satin, belts and buckles; and, with all the rest, hair dressed by a hair-dresser and well saturated with cosmetics over-hanging a narrow, self-willed forehead, where the absence of wrinkles was not so much an indication of youth as of utter lack of ideas. Heurtebise fell in love with her, such as she was, asked for her hand, and, as he had some means, had little difficulty in obtaining it.

The attraction that she found in this marriage was the idea of marrying an author, a well-known man who would give her as many tickets to the play as she wanted. As for him, I fancy that that false shop-girl refinement, those pretentious manners, pursed lips, little finger in the air, had dazzled him as the acme of Parisian distinction, for he was born a peasant, and always remained one at bottom, despite his intellect.

Tempted by the idea of placid happiness, of that domestic life of which he had so long been deprived, Heurtebise passed two years away from his friends, burying himself in the country, in out-of-the-way corners of the suburbs, always within range of the great city, which disturbed his serenity and whose atmosphere he sought to breathe in a weakened form, like those invalids for whom sea air is prescribed, but who, being too delicate to endure it, breathe it at a distance of a few miles. From time to time his name appeared in a newspaper, in a review, at the end of an article; but we already missed that vigorous style, those outbursts of eloquence, which had been characteristic of his work. We thought: "He is too happy — his happiness is spoiling him."

But one day he reappeared among us, and we saw plainly enough that he was not happy. His pale face, his contracted features, distorted by a constant nervous twitching, his former violence of manner reduced to nervous irritability, his hearty, ringing laugh already cracked, made him an entirely different man. Too proud to admit that he

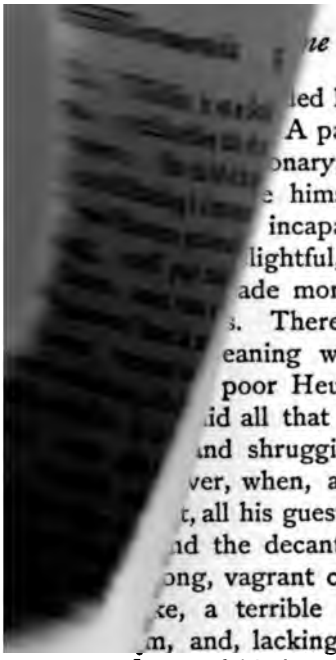
had made a mistake, he did not complain; but his old friends, to whom he reopened his house, soon became convinced that he had made the most foolish of marriages, and that he was off the rails for the rest of his life. On the other hand, Madame Heurtebise, after two years of wedlock, appeared to us just as we had seen her in the sacristy on the wedding-day, — the same placid, simpering smile, the same air of a shop-girl dressed in her Sunday best; but she had acquired self-assurance. She talked now. In the artistic discussions upon which Heurtebise embarked with intense earnestness, with peremptory judgments, brutal contempt, or blind enthusiasm, he would suddenly be interrupted by his wife's bland, false voice, forcing him to listen to some idle argument, some absurd reflection, always outside of the subject. He, annoyed and embarrassed, would look at us with an apologetic glance and try to resume the interrupted conversation. At last, in face of the downright, persistent contradiction, the inanity of that little brain, as empty as an unfledged bird's, he would hold his peace, resigning himself to let her go on to the end. But his silence always exasperated madame, seemed to her more insulting, more disdainful than all the rest. Her bitter-sweet voice would become shrill and piercing, would sting and buzz with the irritating persistency of a fly, until the husband, driven to frenzy, would break out in his turn, brutal and terrifying.

From these incessant quarrels, which ended in tears, she would come forth refreshed, more bloom-

was writing for the senseless chattering of a parcel of idle women who talked very loud, being full of contempt for that trade of literary man, which brings in so little, while its most laborious hours always resemble capricious idleness.

From time to time Heurtebise tried to escape from that life, which was, he felt, becoming more ominous of disaster every day. He would run away to Paris, hire a room at a hotel, and try to fancy that he was a bachelor; but suddenly he would think of his son, and, impelled by a wild longing to embrace him, would return home the same evening. On such occasions, to avoid a scene on his return, he would take a friend with him and keep him as long as he could. When he was not alone with his wife, his fine intellect awoke once more and his interrupted plans of work would gradually come back to him one after another. But what a wrench when his visitor took his leave! He would do his utmost to detain him, would cling to him with all the force of his ennui. With what a dejected mien he would accompany us to the office of the little surburban omnibus which took us back to Paris, and, when we had gone, how slowly he would return along the dusty road, with bent back and arms hanging inertly at his side, listening to the rumble of the receding wheels!

For existence with his wife alone had become unendurable to him. To avoid it he adopted the course of having the house always full. With the concurrence of his kind heart, his ennui, his heed-



led himself with all the starve-
A pack of literary valets, lazy,
onary, were more at home in
e himself was; and as his wife
incapable of judging men, she
lightful, superior to her husband,
ade more noise. Days passed in
s. There was a constant hurly-
eaning words, powder wasted on
poor Heurtebise, sitting motionless
id all that pother, contented himself
nd shrugging his shoulders. Some-
ver, when, at the end of an intermi-
t, all his guests, with their elbows on the
id the decanter of brandy, began one
ong, vagrant conversations as stifling as
ke, a terrible feeling of disgust would
m, and, lacking the strength to turn the
s out of his house, he would go away him-
remain away for a week at a time.

y house is full of idiots," he said to me one
"I don't dare go back there." Leading
a life as that, he ceased altogether to write.
name was rarely seen, and his fortune, squan-
ed to satisfy this constant craving to have
ople in his house, found its way into the hands
at were stretched out to him.

We had not met for a long while when one
norning, I received a line in his dear little hand-
writing, formerly so firm, now hesitating and
trembling: "We are in Paris. Come and see
me. I am bored to death." I found him with

his wife, his child, and his dogs, in a dreary little apartment at Batignolles. The disorder, having no space to spread itself out, seemed even more horrible than in the country. While the child and the dogs rolled on the floor in rooms about the size of checker-boards, Heurtebise lay in bed, ill, with his face to the wall, in a state of utter prostration. The wife, still pretentiously dressed, still perfectly placid, hardly looked at him. "I don't know what 's the matter with him," she said to me with a careless wave of the hand. When he saw me he recovered his gayety, his hearty laugh for a moment, but they were stifled at once. As they had continued in Paris the habits adopted in the suburbs, a parasite appeared at the breakfast hour in that poverty-stricken household turned topsy-turvy by disease, — a bald, threadbare, repellent little man who was called in the house "the man who has read Proudhon." That was the title by which Heurtebise, who probably had never known his name, presented him to everybody. When he was asked, "Who is that?" he would reply with conviction, "Oh! he 's a very bright fellow, who has read Proudhon a great deal." It was hardly apparent, by the way, for that profound mind never manifested itself at table except to complain of a badly cooked roast or an unsuccessful sauce. On that morning the man who had read Proudhon declared that the breakfast was detestable, a fact which did not prevent him from devouring half of it all by himself.

How long and dreary that meal by the sick

man's bedside seemed to me! The woman chattered away as always, with an occasional slap for the child, a bone for the dogs, or a smile for the philosopher. Not once did Heurtebise turn in our direction; and yet he was not asleep. I do not know whether he was thinking. Dear, brave-hearted fellow! The springs of his energetic nature were broken in these constant, paltry quarrels, and he was already beginning to die. This silent agony, which was rather a renunciation of life, lasted several months; then Madame Heurtebise found herself a widow. Thereupon as her tears had not dimmed her bright eyes, as she was still as careful as ever of her glossy tresses, and as Aubertot and Fajon were still eligible, she married Aubertot and Fajon. Perhaps Aubertot, perhaps Fajon, perhaps both. In any event she was able to resume the life for which she was adapted, the ready chatter and everlasting smile of the shop-girl.

II.

THE CREDO OF LOVE.

SHE had always dreamed of that, to be the wife of a poet! But implacable destiny arranged for her, instead of the romantic and feverish existence to which she aspired, wedded bliss of a very tranquil sort, by marrying her to a rich annuitant of Auteuil, a mild and amiable person, albeit a little too old for her, and with but one passion, at once inoffensive and restful, — horticulture. The excellent man passed his time, pruning-knife in hand, nursing and trimming a magnificent collection of rose-bushes, heating the hot-house, watering the flower-beds; and on my word! you will surely agree that for a poor little heart starving for the ideal, there was insufficient pasturage there. For ten years, however, her life went on, as straight and uniform as the paths, strewn with fine gravel, of her husband's garden; and she followed it, counting her steps, listening with an air of resigned weariness to the sharp, irritating snap of the ever-active scissors, or the monotonous, endless shower falling from the nozzles of the watering-pots upon the plants and shrubbery. The fanatical horticulturist took the same minute care of his wife as of his flowers. He watched

the temperature of her salon, which was always filled with bouquets, took precautions in her behalf against frost in April and the hot sun in March; and with his eyes fixed on the barometer and the variations of the moon, forced her to live by fixed rules, like the plants in tubs which are put out-of-doors and taken in at stated times.

She lived in this way for a long while, imprisoned within the four walls of the conjugal garden, as innocent as a clematis, but with aspirations toward other less regular, less bourgeois gardens, where the rose-bushes would put forth all their branches, where the wild plants would grow taller than trees and be laden with fantastic, unfamiliar flowers, at liberty beneath a warmer sun. Such gardens are found nowhere save in books written by poets, so she read many verses, unknown to the nursery-man, who, for his part, knew nothing of poetry beyond the almanac couplets: —

> "Quand il pleut à la Saint-Médard,
> Il pleut quarante jours plus tard."

Gluttonously, with no idea of selection, the poor creature devoured the most wretched poems, provided only that she found therein rhymes for *amour* and *passion;* and when she had closed the book she would pass hours dreaming and sighing, "That's the husband I should have had!"

All this would never probably have passed the stage of vague aspirations, had not the irresistible Amaury happened to cross her path at the fateful age of thirty, which is the decisive age for the

virtue of women, as noon is the decisive hour for the beauty of the day. Amaury is a salon poet, one of those ethereal creatures in black coat and pearl-gray gloves, who go about between ten o'clock and midnight, reciting in fashionable salons their love-rhapsodies, their despairs, their frenzies, leaning with a melancholy air on mantel-pieces, in the bright light of the chandeliers, while women in ball costume, arranged in a circle, listen behind their fans.

He may be considered an ideal specimen of the genus. With the face of a fatalistic cobbler, hollow eye and sallow complexion, he dresses his hair *à la* Russe, and anoints himself plentifully with Hungarian pomade. He is one of those despair-ridden mortals of the sort that women love; always dressed in the latest style, a congealed lyric poet about whom there is nothing to suggest any derangement of the inspiration except his carelessly and loosely tied cravat. And you should hear the applause when he recites in his strident voice a passage from his poem, the *Credo of Love*, especially the passage which concludes with this astounding line: —

"But I believe in love as I believe in God."

Please observe that I strongly suspect this joker of troubling his head as little about God as about anything else; but women do not look so close. They are easily caught in the birdlime of words; and whenever Amaury recites his *Credo of Love*, you are sure to see all around the salon rows of

little pink beaks reaching out for that enticing bait of sentiment. Just think of it! — a poet with such lovely moustaches, who believes in love as he believes in God!

The nursery-man's wife did not resist. In three sittings she was vanquished. But, as there was a substratum of virtue and pride in that elegiac nature, she did not propose to commit any paltry, commonplace sin. Moreover, in his *Credo*, the poet himself declared that he understood only one sort of adultery, the sort which goes about with head erect, as a challenge to the law and to society. Taking the *Credo of Love* for her guide, therefore, the young woman abruptly fled from the garden at Auteuil and threw herself into her poet's arms. "I cannot live with that man any longer! Take me." Under such circumstances the husband is always called *that man*, even when he is a nursery-man.

Amaury was stupefied for a moment. How the devil could he imagine that a little matron of thirty years would take a love-poem seriously and follow it to the letter? However, he met his too good fortune with a brave heart, and as the lady had retained her beauty and bloom in her well-sheltered little garden at Auteuil, he took her without a murmur. At first it was delightful. They were afraid the husband would follow them. They must conceal themselves under assumed names, change their lodgings, live in unlikely quarters, in the suburbs, on the roads surrounding the fortifications. Oh, mighty power of the romantic! The more

frightened she was, the more precautions they must take, — lowered blinds and curtains, — and the greater her poet seemed to her. At night they would open the little window in their chamber, and as they gazed at the stars twinkling above the signals of the neighboring railway, she would make him repeat again and again his —

"But I believe in love as I believe in God."

And it was lovely!

Unfortunately it did not last. The husband left them too undisturbed. What would you have? *That man* was a philosopher. When his wife went away he closed the green gate of his oasis and returned calmly to the care of his roses, thinking with satisfaction that they, at least, having long roots in the ground, could not leave his premises. Our lovers, relieved from apprehension, returned to Paris, and suddenly it seemed to the young woman as if somebody else had been substituted for her poet. The flight, the fear of being surprised, the constant alarms, all those things which served to feed her passion having ceased to exist, she began to understand, to see what she had done. Moreover, in the arrangement of their little household, and in the thousand commonplace details of daily life, the man with whom she was living made himself better known to her every moment.

The small store of generous, heroic, or refined sentiments which he possessed, he used in a diluted form in his verses, keeping none at all for his personal consumption. He was small-minded, selfish,

and above all else very niggardly, — a quality which love never pardons. Then he had shaved his moustaches, and the change was very unbecoming. How different he was from that gloomy, handsome youth with moustaches curled with tongs, who had appeared to her one evening reciting his *Credo* between two candelabra! Now, in the forced retirement he was undergoing because of her, he gave free rein to all his whimsies, the most prominent of which was to think that he was always ill. *Dame!* by dint of posing as consumptive, one ends by imagining that one really is. The poet Amaury was forever taking medicines, he swathed himself in Fayard paper, covered his mantelpiece with phials and powders. For some time the little woman took her rôle of nun seriously. Devotion to an invalid afforded at least some excuse for her fault, gave her an object in life. But she soon wearied of it. In spite of herself, as she sat in the stuffy room with the flannel-enveloped poet, she thought of her fragrant little garden; and the excellent nursery-man, viewed from afar amid his shrubbery and his flower-beds, seemed to her as simple and touching and unselfish as the other was exacting and selfish.

At the end of a month she loved her husband, really loved him, not with an affection born of habit, but with genuine love. One day she wrote him a long, passionate, and repentant letter. He did not reply. Perhaps he did not think she was sufficiently punished as yet. Thereupon she sent letter after letter, humbled herself to the dust,

begged to be taken back, saying that she would rather die than live longer with that man. It was the lover's turn to be called "that man." The most amusing circumstance is that she wrote without his knowledge, for she believed that he was still in love with her, and, while seeking forgiveness from her husband, she dreaded her lover's passion.

"He will never let me go," she said to herself.

And so, when by dint of begging she had obtained her pardon, and the nursery-man — did I not tell you that he was a philosopher? — had consented to take her back, her return to the conjugal dwelling had all the mysterious, dramatic features of a flight. She positively forced her husband to kidnap her. One evening when the poet, weary of life *à deux* and very proud of his newly grown moustaches, had gone into society to recite his *Credo of Love*, she jumped into a cab in which her old husband was waiting for her at the end of the street; and thus did she return to her little garden at Auteuil, forever cured of her ambition to be a poet's wife. To be sure, the poet was not much of a poet!

III.

LA TRASTEVERINA.

THE play had just come to an end. While the audience, variously impressed, rushed out-of-doors, undulating in the light on the broad staircase of the theatre, some friends, of whom I was one, awaited the poet at the stage door, to congratulate him. His work had not, however, met with tremendous success. It was too powerful for the timid, commonplace imagination of the present-day audience, and it was too large for the frame of the stage, the accepted limit of conventions and legitimate liberties. The pedantic critic had said, "It is not adapted to the stage!" and the sneerers of the boulevard avenged themselves for the emotion the magnificent lines had afforded them by repeating, "That play won't make any money!" But we were proud of our friend, who had dared to send forth those beautiful golden rhymes, the whole swarm from his hive, to hum and flutter about the artificial, deadly sun of the chandeliers, and to present characters in their natural size, without troubling himself about the optical qualities of the modern theatre, dim opera-glasses, or poor eyes.

The poet approached us, among the scene-shifters, firemen, and dancers, wrapped in mufflers,

his tall figure bent double, his coat-collar shiveringly turned up around his scanty beard, and his long hair already turning gray. He had an air of dejection. The applause of the *claque* and of the men of intelligence, being confined to a small portion of the hall, seemed to him to foreshadow a very small number of performances, small and select audiences, and a speedy removal of his name from the advertisements, before it had had time to make an impression on the public. When you have worked hard for twenty years, when you are in the prime of life and your talents have attained their full maturity, this unwillingness of the public to understand you is wearisome and discouraging. You reach the point of saying to yourself, "Perhaps they are right." You are afraid, you are no longer certain of yourself. Our congratulations, our enthusiastic hand-clasps encouraged him a little. "Really, do you think so? Is it as good as that? To be sure, I did all that I could do." And his hands, burning with fever, clung anxiously to ours; his tearful eyes craved a sincere, reassuring glance. It was the agonizing supplication of the sick man asking the physician, "Is there any hope for me?" Yes, poet, there is hope for you. When the operettas and fairy extravaganzas which have hundreds of performances and tens of thousands of spectators, have been long forgotten, have taken flight with their last poster, your work will still be young and full of life.

While we were standing there on the deserted sidewalk, exhorting him and cheering him up, a

loud contralto voice, enervated by an Italian accent, exploded in our midst.

"Hé! artist, enough poetry! Let's go home and eat the *estoufato!*"

At the same moment a stout lady enveloped in a hood and a plaid cape with red squares, passed her arm through our friend's with such a brutal, despotic gesture that his face and his bearing at once showed its effects.

"My wife," he said to us; then, turning toward her with a hesitating smile,—

"Suppose we take them along to show them how you make the *estoufato?*"

Impelled by her unlimited self-esteem, the Italian graciously consented to receive us, and away went five or six of us to eat beef *à l'étouffée* on the heights of Montmartre, where they lived.

I confess that I was anxious to see that artist's establishment. Our friend had led a very retired life since his marriage, almost entirely in the country; but what I knew of his wife aroused my curiosity. Fifteen years earlier, when his romantic imagination was at the period of its greatest fervor, he had met, in the outskirts of Rome, a magnificent creature with whom he had fallen deeply in love. Maria Assunta lived with her father and a whole brood of brothers and sisters, in one of those tiny houses in the Trastevere which have their feet in the Tiber and an old fishing-boat at the foot of their walls. One day he spied this fair Italian girl, bare-footed in the sand, in her red petticoat with clinging folds, her cotton sleeves

turned up to the shoulder, taking eels from a great dripping net. The scales gleaming in the water amid the meshes, the golden river, the scarlet petticoat, the lovely black eyes, fathomless and pensive, made darker in their reverie by the glare of sunlight all about, impressed the artist, a little vulgarly perhaps, like an engraving on the cover of a ballad in a music-dealer's shop-window. By chance the girl's heart was free, for she had thus far loved nobody but a mischievous red cat, a huge creature and an expert eel-fisherman as well, whose hair stood on end when any one approached his mistress.

Our lover succeeded in taming the whole family, man and beast, was married at Santa Maria in Trastevere, and brought the fair Assunta to Paris with her *cato.*

Ah! *povero*, he ought also to have brought with him a ray of sunlight from the Trastevere, a patch of blue sky, the eccentric costume, the reeds of the Tiber, and the great twisted cables of the Ponte Rotto,—the whole frame with the picture. Then he would not have had the cruel disillusionment which befell him when, the little family being established in a small fourth-floor apartment in the highest part of Montmartre, he saw his lovely Trasteverina decked out in a hoop-skirt, a dress with flounces and ruffles, and a Parisian hat which, being always insecurely placed upon the edifice of her luxuriant tresses, assumed entirely independent attitudes. In the cold and uncompromising light of the Parisian sky the poor devil soon discovered

that his wife was stupid, irremediably stupid. Those fine black eyes, lost in infinite contemplation, did not toss one single thought about upon their velvet waves. They shone animal-like, with the tranquillity of a good digestion, with a pleasant reflection of the light, nothing more. And moreover the lady was vulgar and countrified, accustomed to govern the whole little world of her father's cabin with a wave of her hand, and the slightest resistance aroused terrible fits of anger.

Who would have dreamed that that mouth which, when she was silent, was of the purest antique outline, would suddenly open to emit insulting epithets in tumultuous, compact waves? Without respect for herself or for him, she would pick a quarrel with him at the top of her voice, in the street, in the theatre, and in her jealousy would make terrible scenes. To complete her portrait, she had no artistic sentiment, was utterly ignorant of her husband's profession, of the French language, customs, everything. As the little French which he taught her served only to make her forget Italian, she had composed a sort of half-and-half jargon, which was comical to the last degree. In fact, this love-story, after beginning like one of Lamartine's poems, was ending like a novel by Champfleury. After trying for a long while to civilize his savage, the poet became convinced that he must abandon the attempt. As he was too upright to desert her, — perhaps he was still in love, — he adopted the course of living in retirement, seeing nobody and working hard.

The few intimate friends whom he had admitted to his house saw that they embarrassed him and soon ceased to go thither. So it was that for fifteen years he had lived shut up in his own home, as in a leper's cabin.

With my mind upon that wretched existence, I watched the strange couple walking before me, — he tall and thin and slightly bent; she square-shouldered and broad, shaking off her shawl which annoyed her, for she had a gait as free as a man's. She was in very good humour, talked a great deal, and turned from time to time to see if we were following, calling those of us whom she knew by their first names, familiarly and in a loud tone, emphasizing her words by energetic gestures, as if she were hailing a fishing-boat on the Tiber. When we reached their domicile, the concierge, enraged to see a noisy party enter the house at an unseemly hour, refused to let us go upstairs. There was a terrible scene in the hall between her and the Italian. We were all standing one above another on the steps of the winding staircase, which was dimly lighted by the flickering gas-jet, embarrassed and uncomfortable, wondering if we ought to take our leave.

"Come, let's go up," said the poet in a low voice; and we followed him in silence, while the Italian, leaning on the stair-rail, which trembled beneath her weight and her wrath, poured forth a volley of vituperation, in which Roman oaths alternated with the vocabulary of the outer boulevards. What a home-coming for that poet, who

had just stirred all artistic Paris to its depths, and in whose fever-bright eyes there was still a trace of the dazzling joy of his first night! What a humiliating recall to life!

Not until we were seated by the fire in his little salon was the icy cold atmosphere generated by that ridiculous episode dissipated, and we should soon have forgotten all about it, had it not been for the loud voice and coarse laughter of the signora, whom we could hear in the kitchen telling her maid how she had given it to that *choulato!* The table laid and the supper prepared, she came and sat down with us, without shawl or hat or veil, and I was able to scrutinize her at my leisure. She was no longer beautiful. The square face, the heavy, broad chin, the coarse hair, now turning gray, and above all the vulgar expression of the mouth were in striking contrast to the eternal, unmeaning reverie of the eyes. With both elbows resting on the table, flabby in appearance and familiar in manner, she joined in the conversation without losing sight of her plate for an instant. Just above her head a large portrait signed by an illustrious name stood proudly forth from the shadow, among the melancholy old lumber in the salon; it was Maria Assunta at twenty. The bright purple dress, the milky white of the plaited wimple, the brilliancy of the abundant false jewels set off magnificently the splendor of a complexion like the sun, the velvety shadow of the thick hair growing low over the forehead and connected by an almost imperceptible down with the superb

straight line of the eyebrows. How could such exuberance of life and beauty have developed into such coarseness? And while La Trasteverina was speaking I questioned with deep interest her profound, sweet glance upon the canvas.

The warmth of the feast put her in good humor. To enliven the poet, whose heart was doubly oppressed by his failure with its slight admixture of glory, she slapped him violently on the back and laughed with her mouth full, saying in her horrible jargon that it was not worth while to leave one's head at the foot of the *campanile del domo* for so small a matter.

"Ain't that so, *cato?*" she added, turning to the old tom-cat, helpless with rheumatism, who lay snoring in front of the fire. Then suddenly, in the midst of an interesting discussion, she shouted to her husband in a hoarse voice, with the brutal abruptness of a pistol-shot: —

"Hé! artist, *la lampo qui filo!*"[1]

The poor fellow, interrupting himself, hastily turned up the lamp, humbly and submissively, eager to avoid the scene which he dreaded, and which, in spite of everything, he did not avoid.

On returning from the theatre, we had stopped at the *Maison d'Or* to buy a bottle of choice wine with which to water the *estoufato*. Maria Assunta had carried it religiously under her shawl all the way, and on our arrival had placed it on the table, where she brooded over it with tender watchfulness, for the Roman women love good wine. Two

[1] The lamp 's going out.

or three times, distrusting her husband's absent-mindedness and his long arms, she had said to him: —

"Look out for the *boteglia;* you 'll break it."

And when she went to the kitchen to take the famous *estoufato* from the stove with her own hand, she cried out to him once more: —

"Above all things, don't break the *boteglia!*"

Unfortunately, as soon as his wife had left the room, the poet seized the opportunity to talk about art, the stage, and success, so freely, with such energy and profusion of words that — *patatras!* — as the result of a gesture more eloquent than the rest, the wonderful bottle lay on the floor in a thousand pieces! I have never seen such utter dismay. He stopped short, turned as pale as death. At the same time Assunta's contralto began to rumble in the adjoining room, and the Italian appeared in the doorway, with fire in her eye, her lips swollen with anger, her face flushed with the heat of the stove.

"The *boteglia!*" she cried in an awful voice.

At that he leaned timidly toward me and whispered: —

"Say that you did it."

And the poor devil was so frightened that I could feel his long legs trembling under the table.

IV.

A FAMILY OF SINGERS.

How could they have failed to love each other, — handsome and famous both, singing in the same pieces, living every evening through five acts of the same artificial, passionate life? One cannot play with fire with impunity. Two people cannot say to each other twenty times a month, "I love you!" to the sighs of the flute and the tremolos of the violin, without finally being infected by the emotion of their own voices. Sooner or later passion comes to them enveloped in harmony, in rhythmical surprises, in splendid costumes and drop-curtains. It came to them through the window which Elsa and Lohengrin throw open to the night vibrating with melody and beauty: —

"Come breathe th' intoxicating perfume."

It glided between the white pillars of the Capulets' balcony, where Romeo and Juliet lingered beneath the first rays of dawn.

"No, 't is not the dawn, 't is not the lark."

And it crept softly upon Faust and Marguerite in the moon-beam that ascends from the rustic bench to the shutters of the little chamber, amid the intertwined ivy and flowering rose-bushes.

"Let me, oh! let me gaze upon thy face."

Soon all Paris knew of their love and became interested in it. It was the curiosity of the season. People came to admire those two lovely stars gravitating toward each other in the musical sky of the Opera. At last, one evening after an enthusiastic recall, just as the curtain had fallen, separating the wildly applauding audience from the flower-strewn stage, where Juliet's white dress swept the petals from the camellias, the two singers were assailed by an irresistible impulse, as if their love, hitherto slightly artificial, were awaiting only the excitement of a great triumph to awake in earnest. Their hands met, vows were exchanged, and consecrated by the persistent, far-off bravos of the audience. The two stars had effected their conjunction.

After their marriage they were not seen again on the stage for some time. But when their leave of absence had expired they reappeared, acting in the same play. That reappearance was a revelation. Hitherto the man had always taken precedence. Being the older of the two and more accustomed to the public, with whose foibles and preferences he was familiar, he swayed pit and boxes with his voice. Beside him the other seemed to be hardly more than an admirably gifted pupil, giving promise of future genius; her too youthful voice had angles, like her slender, somewhat thin shoulders. And so, on their return to the stage when she appeared in one of her familar rôles, and the first notes came forth full-toned, rich and strong, and pure as the water of a living spring, the charm of amazement in the audi-

ence was so great that all the interest of the evening centred about her. For the young woman it was one of those blest days when the surrounding atmosphere becomes limpid, rare, and vibrating, in order to carry the more perfectly all the effulgence, all the adulation of success. As for the husband, they almost forgot to applaud him, and as every dazzling light causes profound darkness in its neighborhood, he found himself relegated to the darkest corner of the stage, like any supernumerary.

After all, that passion which had appeared in the singer's acting, in the increased charm and tenderness of her voice, was inspired by him. He alone awoke the flame in those profound eyes; and that thought should have made him proud; but the actor's vanity was too strong. At the end of the play he summoned the leader of the *claque* and scolded him savagely. They had failed to applaud when he came on and went off; they had forgotten the recall after the third act. He would complain to the manager.

Alas! It made no difference what he said or what the *claque* did, the public favor then accorded to his wife remained permanently with her. She was extremely fortunate in a series of well-selected rôles, appropriate to her talent and beauty, which she acted with the tranquillity of a society belle entering the ball-room dressed in colors which become her, and sure of an ovation. At each fresh triumph the husband seemed depressed, nervous, irritable. It seemed to him as if he had been robbed of the popularity which had passed beyond

hope of recovery from him to her. He tried for a long while to conceal from everybody, especially from his wife, this unavowable torture; but one evening, as she was ascending the stairs to her dressing-room, holding up her skirt, which was filled with bouquets, with both hands, and as, all aglow with her triumph, she said to him in a voice still trembling with the emotion caused by the applause, "We had a fine house to-night!" he replied, "Do you think so?" in such a bitter, ironical tone that the truth suddenly flashed upon the young wife's mind.

Her husband was jealous! not with the jealousy of a lover who wishes his wife to be beautiful for him alone, but with a cold, savage, implacable artist's jealousy. Sometimes, when she stopped at the end of an aria, and plaudits fell about her from every outstretched hand, he would affect an unmoved, distraught countenance, and his absent glance seemed to say to the spectators, "When you have finished applauding I will sing."

Ah! when one has once tasted applause, that patter as of hail which echoes so sweetly in the corridors, the wings, the hall, it is impossible to do without it. Great actors do not die of disease or old age; they cease to exist when the public ceases to applaud them. This man, in face of the indifference of his audiences, was actually driven to desperation. He grew thin, he became sullen and ill-tempered. To no purpose did he argue with himself, look his incurable malady in the face, repeat to himself before going on the stage, —

"But she is my wife. And I love her!"

In the artificial atmosphere of the theatre, the genuine sentiment vanished at once. He still loved the woman, but he detested the singer. She saw it plainly enough, and she kept watch over that pitiable mania as one nurses an invalid. At first it had occurred to her to minimize deliberately her own triumphs, to hold herself back, not put forth her whole voice, all her powers; but her resolutions were no stronger than her husband's in front of the footlights. Her talent went beyond her will, almost independently of herself; thereupon she humbled herself, made herself small before him; she asked his advice, whether he had thought that she did well, whether he read her part as she did.

Naturally, the other was never satisfied. With the patronizing air, the tone of false good-fellowship which actors adopt among themselves, he would say to her, on those evenings when she had won her greatest triumphs: —

"Look out for yourself, my girl — things are n't going very well just now — you 're not making any progress."

At other times he would try to prevent her singing.

"Take care, you 're overtaxing your strength — you 're doing too much. Don't tire out your luck. I tell you, I think you should ask for a leave of absence."

He even descended to the most stupid pretexts: she had a cold, was not in good voice. Or else he

would seek a quarrel with her in true strolling-player fashion: —

"You took up the finale of the duo too soon — you spoiled my effect. You did it on purpose."

He did not realize, the wretch! that it was really he who embarrassed her in her acting, hurried his replies to prevent her being applauded, and, in his frantic longing to recapture his audiences, monopolized the front of the stage, leaving his wife to sing in the background. She did not complain, she loved him too dearly. Moreover, triumph makes one indulgent, and every evening her success forced her to come forth triumphantly into the bright light from the darkness where she tried to blot herself out, to efface herself. At the theatre this strange case of jealousy was soon detected, and their comrades were amused by it. They overwhelmed the singer with congratulations on his wife's talent. They put before him newspaper articles wherein the critic, after four long columns devoted to the star, accorded a few lines to the almost extinct popularity of the husband. One day, after reading one of these articles, he entered his wife's dressing-room in a frenzy, with the newspaper open in his hand, and said to her, white with anger: —

"In God's name, has this man been your lover?"

He descended to that degree of infamy. Thus the unhappy woman, fêted and envied, whose name could now be read in every corner of Paris, in huge letters at the top of the posters, and was seized upon by tradesmen as a bait for customers

and printed on the little gilt labels of confectioners and perfumers, led the saddest, most humiliated life. She dared not open a newspaper for fear of reading an article in her own praise; she wept over the flowers that were thrown to her, and let them wither in a corner of her dressing-room, in order not to perpetuate in their home the painful memory of her triumphant evenings. She would have left the stage, but her husband would not listen to it.

"People will say that I made you do it."

And the horrible torture for them both continued.

One evening — it was a first performance — the actress was just going on the stage. Some one said to her: "Be on your guard. There's a hostile *claque* in the hall." That made her laugh. A *claque* hostile to her! For what cause, in heaven's name? She was on good terms with everybody, she held aloof from all coteries. And yet it was very true. In the middle of the play, during a grand duo with her husband, just as her superb voice, soaring to the highest point of its register, was finishing the phrase with a succession of notes as sweet and pure as the pearls of a necklace, a volley of hisses stopped her short. The audience was as taken aback, as surprised, as she herself. Their very breath seemed suspended, held captive in their lungs, like the passage she had been unable to finish. Suddenly an insane, horrible idea shot through her mind. He and she were alone on the stage. She gazed fixedly at him and saw the gleam of a wicked smile in his eyes. The poor

woman understood. Her whole frame shook with sobs. She could only burst into tears and disappear, with streaming eyes, into the obscurity of the wings.

It was her husband who had caused her to be hissed!

V.

A MISUNDERSTANDING.

THE WIFE'S VERSION.

What is the matter? Why is he angry with me? I cannot understand it at all. I have done all that I can to make him happy. Mon Dieu! I don't say that I would not have preferred to marry a notary, a solicitor, a member of some more sedate, less flighty profession, instead of a poet; but such as he was he attracted me. I thought him a little high-flown in his ideas, but very pleasant all the same, and so well-bred; and then he had some means, and I thought that when he was once married his poetry would not prevent him from looking out for a good place, which would put us altogether at our ease. He found me to his liking, too, in those days. When he came to see me at my aunt's in the country, he couldn't find words enough to express his admiration of the orderly arrangement of our little house, which was kept as neat as a convent. "It is amusing!" he used to say. And he would laugh and call me by all sorts of names taken from the poems and novels he had read. That annoyed me a little, I confess; I would have preferred to have him more serious. But not until we

V.

A MISUNDERSTANDING.

THE HUSBAND'S VERSION.

I HAD thought of everything, taken all my precautions. I would not have a Parisian, because I was afraid of Parisians. I would not have a rich woman, who would bring with her a whole train of petty tyrannies. I also dreaded the family, that terrible network of bourgeois affections which monopolize you, imprison you, stifle you, make you smaller. My wife was just the sort of person I had dreamed of. I said to myself: —

"She will owe everything to me. What a delight to train this innocent mind to appreciate lovely things; to admit this pure soul to the secret of my enthusiasms, my hopes; to give life to this statue!"

She really had the appearance of a statue, with her great eyes, so serious and calm, her regular Greek profile, her slightly sharp and severe features, softened, however, by the blending of tones common to all youthful faces, by that rose-tinted down, the shadow of the hair when brushed back from the forehead. Add to this a slight provincial accent which was my delight, to which I lis-

THE WIFE'S VERSION.

were married and installed in Paris did I realize the difference between our two natures.

I, who had dreamed of a light and airy little home, tidy and neat, was horrified to see him fill our apartment at once with useless pieces of furniture, long out of fashion, inches deep with dust, and with faded tapestries hundreds of years old. It was the same way in everything. Just fancy that he made me put a very pretty Empire clock which came to me from my aunt, and some magnificently framed pictures given me by some boarding-school friends, into the attic. He thought they were all hideous. I am still wondering why. For his study was a motley collection of old, smoke-begrimed canvases, statuettes that I was ashamed to look at, broken curios, good for nothing, chandeliers covered with verdigris, vases that would n't hold water, and mismatched cups. Beside my lovely violet-wood piano he had placed a wretched battered little thing, with half the notes gone, and so worn-out that you could hardly hear it. I began to say to myself: "Well, well! it seems that an artist is a bit of a lunatic. He cares for nothing but useless things, he despises anything that will serve any useful purpose."

When I saw his friends, the people whom he received, it was much worse. Men with long hair and beards, unkempt, poorly dressed, who had no compunctions about smoking in my presence, and who made me ill to hear them talk, all their ideas were so entirely contrary to mine. It was all long

tened with closed eyes as to a memory of happy childhood, the echo of a tranquil life in some far-away, unknown retreat. And to think that now that accent has become unendurable to me! But I had faith then. I loved, I was happy, and disposed to be still more so. Overflowing with ardor and love of toil, I had begun a new poem as soon as I was married, and in the evening I would read her the lines I had written during the day. I desired that she should enter completely into my life. The first two or three times she said, "That is very pretty," — and I was grateful to her for that childlike approbation, hoping that before long she would reach a better understanding of the things that made up my life.

Poor creature! how I must have tortured her! After reading my lines to her, I would explain them, seeking in her lovely, astonished eyes the expected gleam, constantly fancying that I saw it. I compelled her to give me her opinion, and I glided over the foolish things she said, to remember only such clever things as chance happened to inspire. I would have liked so much to make her my true wife, the wife of an artist! But no! She did not understand. In vain did I read the great poets to her, appeal for aid to the most powerful and tenderest of them all; the golden rhymes of their poems of love were as wearisome and cold to her as a shower. Once, I remember we were reading the *Nuit d'Octobre;* she interrupted me to ask me a question on some more serious subject.

THE WIFE'S VERSION.

words, involved sentences; nothing natural, nothing simple. And with it all not the slightest idea of the proprieties; you might have them to dinner twenty times in succession, but never a call, never an act of courtesy. Not even a card, a bonbon on New Year's Day. Nothing. Some of these gentry were married and used to bring their wives. You should have seen the sort of creatures they were! Superb dresses every day, such as I shall never wear, thank God! And so badly arranged, without order or method. Fluffy hair, trailing skirts, and talents which they displayed with the utmost effrontery. There were some who sang like actresses, some who played the piano like professors, and they all chattered like men on every subject. Is that reasonable, I ask you? Is it proper for serious-minded women, when they are once married, to think about anything but their household cares? That is what I tried to make my husband understand when he was distressed because I gave up music. Music is all right when one is a small girl and has nothing better to do. But, frankly, I should have made a very absurd appearance, it seems to me, planting myself in front of a piano every day.

Oh! I am perfectly well aware that his great grievance against me is that I tried to remove him from that environment which is so dangerous for him. "You have driven away all my friends," is a charge he often brings against me. Yes, I have done it, and I do not repent. Those people would have ended by driving him mad. Sometimes, after

THE HUSBAND'S VERSION.

Thereupon I tried to explain that there is nothing more serious in the world than poetry, which is the very essence of life and floats above it like a vibrating light into which words and thoughts ascend, there to be transfigured. Oh! the disdainful smile that played about her pretty mouth, and the pitying condescension of her glance! You would have said that it was a child or a madman who was speaking to her.

Ah! the energy and eloquence I expended thus, and all in vain! Nothing could produce any effect. I constantly came in collision with what she called common-sense, reason, the everlasting excuse of cold hearts and narrow minds. And poetry is not the only thing that bored her. Before we were married I had thought that she was a musician. She seemed to understand the pieces she played, underscored by her teacher. She was no sooner married than she closed her piano, gave up her music. Can you imagine anything sadder than this renunciation by the young wife of everything that was attractive in the girl? The reply delivered, the play ended, the *ingénue* lays aside her costume. It was all assumed with a view to marriage, a superficial gloss of petty talents, pretty smiles, and temporary refinement. In her case the change was instantaneous. I had hoped at first that the taste I could not instil in her, appreciation of art, of beautiful things, would come to her in spite of herself in this marvellous Paris where the eyes and mind are refined

THE WIFE'S VERSION.

leaving them, he would pass the whole night making paltry rhymes, pacing the room and talking aloud. As if he were not odd enough, original enough himself, without people coming to make him worse! How many of his whims, his crochets I have put up with! He would suddenly appear in my room in the morning. "Come, put on your hat quickly. We are going into the country." I must drop everything, sewing and housework, hire cabs, ride in railway cars, and spend a lot of money! And when I thought of nothing but economizing! For I tell you it takes more than fifteen thousand francs a year to be rich in Paris and at the same time lay by a little something for your children. In the beginning he used to laugh at my remarks, and try to make me laugh; then, when he saw that I was determined to remain serious, he was displeased with me for my simplicity, my domestic tastes. Is it my fault, pray, if I detest the theatre, concerts, all the artistic functions to which he insisted on dragging me, and where he met his acquaintances of the old days, a parcel of hare-brained, dissipated bohemians?

For a moment I thought that he was going to be more reasonable. I had succeeded in removing him from his disgusting circle of intimates, in forming a little coterie of sensible, sober-minded people, in establishing connections that might be useful to him. But no, Monsieur was bored. He was bored from morning till night. At our little evening-parties, although I provided whist-tables, a tea-table, every-

THE HUSBAND'S VERSION.

without suspecting it. But what was to be done with a woman who does not know how to open a book or look at a picture, to whom everything is a bore, who does not care to see anything? I realized that I must resign myself to the prospect of having beside me simply a bustling and economical — oh! a very economical — housekeeper; the wife according to Proudhon, nothing more. I would have done the best I could; so many artists are in my plight! But that modest rôle did not satisfy her.

Little by little, craftily, stealthily, she succeeded in driving away all my friends. We were perfectly unconstrained in her presence. We talked just as we used to do; and she comprehended neither the idealism nor the irony of our artistic exaggerations, of those extravagant axioms, those paradoxes in which the idea assumes a burlesque costume the better to draw forth a smile. It all simply irritated and puzzled her. She would sit in a corner of the salon, listening without speaking, firmly resolved to eliminate one by one all those men who were so offensive to her. Notwithstanding the apparent heartiness of her welcome, they soon began to feel in my house the little current of cold air which warns you that the door is open and that it is time to go.

When my friends had gone she replaced them by her own. I found myself overrun by a parcel of imbeciles, unacquainted with art, tiresome to the last degree, who despised poetry because "it

THE WIFE'S VERSION.

thing that was proper, he would appear with such a sour face, in such an ill-humor! When we were alone it was the same thing. And yet I was constantly showing him little attentions. I would say to him, "Read me what you are doing." And he would recite verses, whole passages. I could n't understand them at all, but I always pretended to be deeply interested, and I would make some little comment at random here and there, which always had the effect of irritating him. In a whole year, working day and night, he was only able, with all his rhymes, to make just one book, which did not sell at all. I said to him, "There! you see —" by way of argument to turn him to something easier to understand, more productive. He flew into a terrible rage, and that was followed by a constant depression which made me very unhappy. My friends advised me as best they could. "You see, my dear, it's ennui, the ill-humor of an idle man. If he would work a little more, he would n't be so dismal."

So I and all my friends began to look about to find a place for him. I moved heaven and earth; I made heaven knows how many visits to wives of general secretaries and department chiefs; I even went as far as the minister's private office, — all without a word to him. I intended to give him a pleasant surprise. I said to myself, "We will see if he will be satisfied this time." At last, on the day when I received his appointment, a great envelope with five seals, I went and left it on his table, wild with delight. It meant that our future was

THE HUSBAND'S VERSION.

is n't productive." They purposely mentioned before me, in a loud tone, the names of fashionable scribblers, manufacturers of plays and novels by the dozen: "So-and-so earns a great deal of money!"

To earn money! that is the sole object in life with these monsters, and I had the chagrin of seeing that my wife agreed with them. In that unpropitious environment, all her provincial habits, her narrow, parsimonious views, had degenerated into incredible avarice.

Fifteen thousand francs a year! It seemed to me that with that income one might live without worrying about the morrow. But no. I was obliged to listen to constant complaints from her, talk of economy, of reforms, of advantageous investments. As she enveloped me in these paltry details, I felt the taste and desire for work turning their backs on me. Sometimes she would come to my table and disdainfully turn over the leaves of a poem I was just beginning. "What's all this?" she would exclaim, reckoning the hours wasted on those insignificant little lines. Ah! if I had chosen to listen to her, this glorious name of poet, which I have spent so many years in earning, would be trailing in the black mud of production at wholesale. And when I think that at first I gave my whole heart and all my dreams into that woman's keeping; when I think that this contempt she now displays for me, because I do not earn money, dates from the first moments of

THE WIFE'S VERSION.

assured, a comfortable home, the tranquillity born of honest toil and self-content. What do you suppose he said? He said that he would never forgive me! Whereupon he tore the minister's letter into a thousand pieces and fled, slamming the doors behind him. Oh! these artists, poor deranged creatures who take life all awry! What will become of me with such a man? I would have talked with him, argued with him. But no. That person was right who told me, "He's a madman!" Indeed, what is the use of speaking to him? We do not use the same language. He would not understand me any more than I understand him. And so here we are, looking blankly at each other. I can read hatred in his eyes, and yet I am still fond of him. It is very painful.

THE HUSBAND'S VERSION.

our married life! Really I am ashamed for myself and for her.

I do not earn money! That explains everything, the reproach in her glance, her admiration for productive nobodies, and the steps she took to procure for me some place or other in a government office.

But I would have none of it. That is all I have left now, an inert will, proof against all assaults, all invasions. She can talk for hours, congeal me with her coldest smile, but my thoughts elude her, and always will elude her. And that is where we stand! Married, doomed to live together as we are, long leagues separate us, and we are too weary, too discouraged, to try to move toward each other. And it is for life. Oh! it is horrible!

VI.

ACTS OF VIOLENCE.

OFFICE OF MAÎTRE PETITBRY,
Consulting Advocate.

To Madame Nina de B——,
at her aunt's at Moulins:

MADAME, — In accordance with the instructions of Madame your aunt, I have given my attention to the matter in question. I have taken up the facts one after another and subjected all your grievances to a most careful examination. Very good; in my heart and conscience, I do not consider that the fruit is yet ripe enough, or, to speak more plainly, that you have as yet any serious basis for a petition for judicial separation. Let us not forget that French law is a very positive person, who has neither delicacy nor an appreciation of nice shades of sentiment. She takes cognizance of nothing but the fact, the brutal, downright fact, and unluckily that fact is just what we have not. I certainly was deeply touched when I read your story of that first year of married life, which was so painful to you. You paid very dear for the glory of marrying a famous artist, one of those men in whom renown and flattery develop abnormal egotism, and who must either live alone or shatter the fragile and timid existence which tries to cling to theirs. Ah! madame, since the beginning of my professional career, how many unhappy wives I have seen in the sad plight in which you now

are! These artists who live by the public and for it exclusively, bring to the domestic fireside only the fatigue of their glory or the depression caused by their failures. A life devoid of order, without rudder or compass, subversive ideas at variance with all social conventions, contempt for the family and its joys, cerebral excitement sought in the excessive use of tobacco, of strong liquors, to say nothing of the rest, — these are what constitute this dangerous artistic element from which your aunt is so desirous to remove you; but I say again, while I appreciate her anxiety, yes, and her remorse for having given her consent to such a marriage, I do not see that affairs have reached the point at which you would be justified in the petition you contemplate.

I have, however, already begun the draft of a memorandum in which your principal grievances are grouped and set forth with some skill. These are the main divisions of the work: —

1st. *Monsieur's ungentlemanly treatment of Madame's family.* — His refusal to receive our aunt from Moulins, who brought us up and is very fond of us. — The sobriquets of *Tata-Bobosse*, *Fée Carabosse*, and the like, applied to that venerable spinster, whose back is slightly bent. — Mockery, epigrams, pen and pencil sketches of the said spinster and her infirmity.

2d. *Unsociableness*. — Refusal to see Madame's friends, to make wedding calls, to send cards, to answer invitations, etc.

3d. *Extravagance.* — Money loaned without receipt to all sorts of bohemians. — Table always laid, house transformed into a caravansary. — Constant subscriptions for statues, gravestones, and productions of unfortunate

brethren. — Foundation of an artistic and literary review ! ! ! !

4th. *Vulgar remarks about Madame.* — Saying aloud, referring to us, "What a turkey ! "

5th. *Ill-usage and Violence.* — Monsieur's excessive brutality. — Flies into a rage on the slightest pretext. — Shatters crockery and furniture. — Uproar, scandal, unseemly expressions.

All this, dear madame, as you see, forms a very respectable, but insufficient indictment. We lack the actual violence. Ah ! if we only had an act of violence, one tiny little act of violence before witnesses, our case would be magnificent. But we cannot hope for an event of that kind, now that you have placed fifty leagues between yourself and your husband. I say "hope," because, in the present situation of affairs, an exhibition of brutality on that man's part would have been the most fortunate thing that could happen.

Awaiting your commands, madame, I am your respectful and devoted servant,

PETITBRY.

P. S. — Brutality before witnesses, understand !

To Maître Petitbry, Paris :

And so, monsieur, this is what we have come to ! This is what your laws have made of the old French chivalry ! And so, although a misunderstanding is often sufficient to separate two hearts forever, your courts must have acts of violence to justify such a separation ! Is it not a shameful, unjust, barbarous, crying outrage ? To think that, in order to recover her liberty, my poor girl must go and hold out her neck to the executioner, must abandon herself to all the monster's fury, ay, in-

flame it! But no matter, our minds are made up. You must have acts of violence. Very good! you shall have them. To-morrow Nina returns to Paris. How will she be greeted? What will happen? I cannot think of it without a shudder. At the thought my hand trembles, my eyes fill with tears. Ah! Monsieur. Ah! Maître Petitbry! Ah!

NINA'S UNFORTUNATE AUNT.

OFFICE OF MAÎTRE MARESTANG,
Solicitor to the Tribunal of the Seine.

Monsieur Henri de B——,
Man of Letters, Paris:

Be calm, be calm, be calm! I forbid you to go to Moulins, to rush off in pursuit of your fugitive. It is the wisest and surest plan to wait by your own chimney-corner. After all, what was it that happened? You refused to receive that absurd, evil-tongued old maid; your wife went off to join her. You must wait. Family ties are very strong in the heart of a young woman so newly married. You attempted to go too fast. Remember that this aunt brought her up, that she has no other relations. She has her husband, you will say. Ah! my dear boy, between ourselves we can afford to admit that husbands are not amiable every day. I know one in particular who, notwithstanding his kind heart, is so nervous and high-strung! I agree that hard work and artistic preoccupation are partly responsible for it. Nevertheless the bird has taken fright and flown back to its old cage. Have no fear; it will not remain there long. Either I am sadly mistaken or that Parisian of yesterday will very soon grow weary of her superannuated

surroundings and will not be long without regretting her poet's outbursts. Above all things, do not budge.

Your old friend,

MARESTANG.

To Maître Marestang,
Solicitor, Paris:

At the same time that your sensible and friendly letter reached me, I received a telegram from Moulins announcing Nina's return. Ah! what an excellent prophet you were! She arrives this evening, entirely alone, as she went away, without the slightest move on my part. What I must do now is to make her life so peaceful and pleasant that she will have no further temptation to go away. I have laid in a vast stock of affection and patience during this week's separation. There is only one point on which I am unchangeable. I do not propose to have that horrible Tata-Bobosse in my house again, that blue-stocking of 1820, who gave her niece to me solely because she hoped that my petty celebrity would give hers a boost. Consider, my dear Marestang, that ever since my marriage that wretched little old woman has constantly come between my wife and myself, protruding her hunchback into all our pleasures, all our parties, at the theatre, at the exhibitions, in society, in the country, everywhere. That being so, are you surprised that I was somewhat precipitate about turning her out, sending her back to her good town of Moulins? I tell you, my dear fellow, you have no idea of the mischief these old maids, naturally suspicious and ignorant of life, are capable of making in a young family. She had stuffed my wife's pretty little head with false, old-fashioned, ridiculous ideas, a rococo sentimentalism of the days of Ipsiboé and young Florange: *Ah, if my lady*

should see me! — To her mind I was simply a *poâte*, the kind of *poâte* you see in Renduel's or Ladvocat's frontispieces, crowned with laurel, with a lyre on his hip, and the breeze from the lofty mountain-tops swelling his short cloak with its velvet collar. That is the sort of husband she had promised her niece, and you can imagine my poor Nina's disappointment. However, I agree that I was very maladroit in dealing with the poor child. As you say, I tried to go too fast, I frightened her. Her education was so narrow, she had imbibed such false ideas from the convent and from her aunt's sentimental maunderings, that it was my duty to begin very gently to educate her anew, giving the provincial perfume time to evaporate. However, it is all reparable, since she is coming back. She is coming back, my dear friend! To-night I shall go and meet her at the station, and we shall return home arm-in-arm, reconciled and happy.

HENRI DE B——.

NINA DE B—— TO HER AUNT AT MOULINS.

He was waiting for me at the station, and received me smiling, with outstretched arms, as if I were returning from an ordinary journey. As you can imagine, I assumed my most frigid expression. As soon as we reached home I shut myself up in my room, where I dined alone on the pretext of fatigue. Then I gave the key a double turn. He came and bade me good-night through the key-hole, and to my great surprise walked away on tiptoe without losing his temper or insisting on being admitted. This morning I called on Maître Petitbry, who instructed me at great length as to the course of conduct I should adopt, — the time, the place, the witnesses. Ah! my dear aunt, if you knew

how my fear increases as the moment draws nearer! His fits of anger are so terrible. Even when he is mild and pleasant as he was last night, his eyes flash as if a storm were brewing. However, I shall be strong when I think of you, darling. Besides, as Maître Petitbry says, there is only one unpleasant moment to live through; then we will resume our former calm and happy life together. NINA DE B——.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I am writing in bed, dear aunt, prostrated by the excitement of that terrible scene. Who would have dreamed that things would turn out thus? And yet all my precautions were taken. I had notified Marthe and her sister, who were to come at one o'clock, and I had selected for the great scene the moment of leaving the table, while the servants were removing the dishes in the dining-room, which adjoins the study. My batteries were all prepared in the morning; an hour of scales and exercises on the piano, the *Cloches du Monastère*, the *Rêveries de Rosellen*, all the pieces he detests. That did not prevent his working constantly, without the slightest sign of irritation. At breakfast, the same unruffled patience. An execrable breakfast it was, too,—odds and ends, and sweet dishes which he cannot endure. And if you could have seen my costume! A gown five years old, a little black-silk apron, hair out of curl! I looked for signs of irritation on his forehead, for that straight furrow I know so well, which Monsieur digs between his eyebrows when he is vexed in the slightest degree. But no, nothing of the sort. It was enough to make me believe that my husband had been changed. He said to me in a calm, slightly sad tone:

"Ah! you have gone back to your old way of wearing your hair?"

I hardly answered, preferring not to hasten matters before the witnesses arrived; and then, it 's a curious thing! — I felt deeply moved, excited in anticipation of the scene I was trying to bring about. At last, after a few decidedly sharp replies on my part, he left the table and went to his study. I followed him, all in a tremble. I could hear my friends seating themselves in the small salon, and Pierre going in and out of the dining-room, arranging the silver and the glasses. The moment had come. I must incite him to acts of violence, and that seemed to me a simple matter after all that I had done since the morning to irritate him.

I must have been deathly pale when I entered his study! I felt that I was in the lion's cage. "Suppose he should kill me!" I thought. He did n't look very terrible, however, lying on his divan with a cigar in his mouth.

"Do I disturb you?" I asked in my most ironical voice.

"No," he answered tranquilly. "As you see, I am not working."

I, still very nasty: —

"Ah! do you never work, pray?"

He, still very amiable: —

"You are mistaken, my dear. On the contrary, I work a great deal. But ours is one of the trades at which a man can work when he has no tools in his hand."

"And what are you doing at this moment? Oh! yes, I know, your play in verse — always the same thing for two years past. Do you know what a lucky thing it is

that your wife has a little money? That enables you to be as lazy as you please."

I thought that he would jump at me then. Not at all. He came and took my hands very kindly.

"Well, well, is it still the same old story? Are we going to begin anew our life of constant warfare? In that case why did you come back?"

I confess that I was a little touched by his sad and affectionate tone; but I thought of you, my poor aunt, of your exile, of all he has done, and that gave me courage. I tried to think what would be the bitterest, the most wounding thing I could say to him. I don't know what I said — that I was in despair at having married an artist; that at Moulins everybody pitied me; that I had found my girl friends married to magistrates, serious-minded, influential men, of assured position, while he — if he only earned money! But no, Monsieur worked for renown. And such renown! No one at Moulins knew of him, and at Paris his plays were hissed. His books did not sell. And *patati*, and *patata*. My brain whirled with all the spiteful words that rushed into it as I went on. He gazed at me without answering, with cold anger. Naturally his coldness exasperated me still more. I was so excited that I could not recognize my voice, which was pitched extraordinarily high, and the last words I shrieked at him — some unjust, foolish epigram or other — buzzed in my bewildered ears. For the moment I thought that Maître Petitbry would have his act of violence. Pale as death, with clenched teeth, Henri had taken two steps toward me.

"Madame!"

Then his wrath suddenly vanished, his face became impassive once more, and he looked at me with such a

calm, scornful, insolent expression! Ah! on my word, my patience was exhausted; I raised my hand and *vlan!* I gave him the prettiest slap that I ever gave in my life. At the sound the door opened and my witnesses appeared, horrified and solemn.

"Monsieur, this is an outrage!"

"Is n't it?" said the poor fellow, pointing to his red cheek.

You can imagine whether I was confused. Luckily I had adopted the plan of fainting and of shedding all the tears I had, which relieved me very much. Henri is in my room now. He is taking care of me, nursing me, and he is really very, very kind to me. What am I to do? What a hopeless tangle! Maître Petitbry will not be pleased.

NINA DE B——.

VII.

BOHEMIA EN FAMILLE.

I DO not think that a more eccentric and more cheerful interior can be found in all Paris than Simaise the sculptor's. Life in that house is a perpetual holiday. At whatever hour you arrive you hear laughter and singing, and the music of a piano, a guitar, or a tom-tom. If you enter the studio, it rarely happens that you do not find yourself in the midst of a game of battledore, a waltz, or a figure in a quadrille, or else amid preparations for a ball, clippings of tulle, ribbons lying beside modelling tools, artificial flowers hanging on busts, and spangled skirts spread out on groups of which the clay is still moist.

There are four tall girls there, you see, from sixteen to twenty-five years of age, very pretty, but all-pervading; and when these young ladies whirl about with their hair down their backs, a mass of flying ribbons, long pins, and light curls, you would say that, instead of four, there were eight, sixteen, thirty-two Mesdemoiselles Simaise, each as frolicsome as the others, talking loud, laughing heartily, one and all with the slightly boyish manner peculiar to artists' daughters, with studio gestures and the self-possession of an art-student; and incom-

parably skilful in turning away a creditor or dusting the jacket of a tradesman insolent enough to present his bill at an inopportune moment.

These young women are the real mistresses of the house. The father works from daybreak, modelling and chiselling without respite, for he has no means. In the beginning he was ambitious, struggled hard to do well. Several successful works at the Exposition seemed to promise a certain measure of renown. But this expensive family to feed and dress and start in life prevented him from rising above mediocrity in his profession. As for Madame Simaise, she is of no account at all. Being very beautiful at the time of her marriage, and very popular in the artistic circle to which her husband introduced her, she condemned herself to be, at first, simply a pretty woman, and later, simply a woman who was once pretty. Being of Creole origin as she claims — although I am assured that her parents never left Courbevoie — she passes her days from morning till night in a hammock slung in every room in turn, fans herself and takes siestas, with a profound contempt for the material details of life. She has posed so often for her husband for Hebes and Dianas that she thinks of herself as passing through life with a crescent on her brow, a cup in her hand, laden with emblems, and as having no other work to do. And you should see what confusion there is in the house. It takes an hour to find anything.

"Have you my thimble? — Marthe, Éva, Geneviève, Madeleine, who has seen my thimble?"

The drawers, in which books, powder, rouge, spangles, spoons, and fans are thrown pell-mell are filled to the brim, but contain nothing of any use; moreover, they belong to odd, curious, incomplete, battered pieces of furniture. And the house itself is so singular! As they often move, they have no time to get settled, and that light-hearted establishment always seems to be awaiting the complete, indispensable setting to rights which follows a ball. But so many things are lacking that it is not worth while to try to set the place to rights, and if only they have a little something to wear, if they can flit through the streets with the brilliancy of a meteor, a suggestion of *chic*, and an appearance of splendor, honor is safe. This tribe of nomads is in no wise embarrassed by camp-life. Through the open doors poverty suddenly displays itself in the four bare walls of an unfurnished room, in the confusion of an over-crowded chamber. It is bohemianism *en famille*, a life of unexpected episodes, of surprises.

Just as they are sitting down at table they discover that there is nothing to eat, and that some one must go out in a hurry and get breakfast. In this way the hours pass swiftly, being full of excitement if not of work; and then there is this advantage in their life: when they breakfast late they do not dine, making up for it by supping at the ball, where they go almost every evening. These ladies often give evening parties too. Tea is served in outlandish receptacles, mugs, tumblers, and Japanese shells, all cracked and chipped by frequent mov-

ings. The serenity of the mother and daughters amid this destitution is something admirable. Faith! they have many other things than housekeeping in their heads. The hair of one is brushed smooth like a Swiss peasant's, another is curled like an English baby, and Madame Simaise in her hammock lives in the blissful memories of her former beauty. As for Père Simaise, he is always happy. So long as he hears his daughters' rippling laughter about him, he bears with a light heart all the burden of that disordered existence. To him they apply cajolingly: "Papa, I need a hat; papa, I must have a dress." Sometimes there is a hard winter. They go out so much, they receive so many invitations. Bah! the father manages by rising two hours earlier. They have but one fire in the house, in the studio, where the whole family assembles. The young ladies cut and make their dresses themselves, while the hammock rope creaks regularly and the father works away, squatting on his stool.

Have you ever met these ladies in society? As soon as they appear there is a murmur and stir. The two oldest have been known for a long while; but they are always so becomingly dressed, so spruce, that there is great rivalry for the honor of dancing with them. They are quite as popular as their younger sisters, almost as much as their mother in the older days; and they have such a graceful way of wearing fashionable gowns and jewels, such a charming spontaneity of manner, with the wild laughter of ill-bred children and a

trick of fanning themselves in the Spanish fashion. In spite of everything, they do not marry. No admirer has ever been able to resist the spectacle of that extraordinary home. The havoc wrought by useless extravagance, the lack of plates, the profusion of old torn tapestries, of disjointed and discolored antique chandeliers, the current of air from the doors, the constant ringing of creditors, the untidiness of the young ladies in *peignoir* and slippers, dawdling about in furnished lodgings, put the best-intentioned lovers to flight. What can you expect? Not every man can resign himself to the idea of hanging an indolent woman's hammock by his side for life.

I am very much afraid that Mesdemoiselles Simaise will never marry. They had, however, a unique and magnificent opportunity during the Commune. The family had taken refuge in Normandie, in a small but very litigious town, full of solicitors, notaries, and land-agents. The father looked about for work as soon as he arrived. His renown as a sculptor was of service to him; and as there was a statue of Cajas by him in a public square in the town, the notabilities vied with one another in ordering their busts. The mother slung her hammock forthwith in a corner of the studio, and the young ladies organized small parties. They made a great hit at once. There, you see, poverty seemed an incident of exile, the unsettled air of the establishment had its justification. The fashionable damsels made merry over their poverty. They had left Paris empty-handed. Paris being

closed to the outside world, nothing could reach them. It rather added to their charms. It made one think of the travelling gypsies who comb their lovely hair in a barn and quench their thirst at a brook. The least poetic mentally compared them to the exiles at Coblentz, to the ladies of Marie-Antoinette's court, who left in hot haste, without powder or hoops or maids, and were forced to resort to all sorts of expedients, to learn to wait upon themselves, and who retained nevertheless the frivolous manners of the court of France, the black patches, now discarded, giving piquancy to the smile.

Every evening the Simaise study was overrun by a parcel of dazzled limbs of the law. There was a hired piano, and they all polkaed and waltzed and *schottisched*—the schottische is still danced in Normandie. "I shall surely marry off one of them at last," said Père Simaise to himself; and, in all likelihood, when one had gone the others would have followed. Unfortunately the first one did not go, but she came very, very near it. Among the young ladies' numerous partners in that *corps de ballet* of solicitors, deputy-attorneys, and notaries, the most enthusiastic dancer was a solicitor, a widower, who was very attentive to the oldest daughter. He was known in the house as "the first dancing solicitor," in memory of Molière's ballets; and Père Simaise, seeing how frantically the old dandy capered about, undoubtedly based his fondest hopes upon him. But men of affairs do not dance like other men.

And this one, as he waltzed, reflected thus: "This Simaise family is charming — tra la la — la la la — but they need not try to hurry me — la la la — la la lère — I'll make no bargain till the gates of Paris are reopened — tra la la — and I have had a chance to find out a thing or two — la la la." Thus did the first dancing solicitor reflect; and as soon as the siege of Paris was raised he made inquiries about the family and the marriage fell through.

Since then the poor little girls have missed many others. But the cheerfulness of that strange household is in no wise disturbed thereby. On the contrary, the longer they live the merrier they are. Last winter they moved three times and were sold out once, and yet they gave two large fancy-dress balls.

VIII.

FRAGMENT OF A WOMAN'S LETTER, FOUND ON RUE NOTRE-DAME-DES-CHAMPS.

. . . much it has cost me to have married an artist! Ah! my dear, if I had known! — but young girls have such queer ideas on all subjects. Just fancy that at the Salon, when I saw on the catalogue the addresses of the artists on those far-away, peaceful streets, at the extreme end of Paris, I imagined them leading tranquil, sedentary lives, wrapped up in their work and their families; and I said to myself, realizing beforehand how jealous I should be: "That is the sort of husband I want. He will always be with me. We will pass all our days together, he at his picture or his sculpture, I reading or sewing at his side in the subdued light of the studio." Poor innocent fool! I had no suspicion then of what a studio was, nor of the strange kind of people one meets there. Never, when I was looking at those statues of goddesses so brazenly *décolleté*, did it occur to me that there could be women so shameless as to — and that I myself — Otherwise I beg you to believe that I would not have married a sculptor. Ah! no indeed, I should think not! I ought to say that at

home they were all opposed to my marriage, in spite of my husband's wealth, his already famous name, and the beautiful house he built for me. But I was determined upon it. He was so refined, so charming, so attentive! It seemed to me, however, that he had a little too much to say about my dress, my way of arranging my hair. "Pray brush your hair back like this — so," and monsieur would amuse himself by placing a flower amid my curls with more art than the best of our *modistes*. So much experience in such things in a man was terrifying, was n't it? I ought to have distrusted him. However, you shall hear. Listen.

We had returned from our wedding journey. While I was getting settled in my pretty, beautifully furnished little apartment — the paradise which you know so well — my husband, immediately upon our arrival, began to work, and passed his days in his studio, away from the house. When he came home at night he would talk to me feverishly about his statue in the approaching Salon. The subject was "A Roman Lady leaving the Bath." He was striving to reproduce in the marble the little shiver at the touch of the air, the moisture of the fine stuff clinging to her shoulders, and all sorts of other beautiful things that I don't now remember. Between ourselves, when he is talking sculpture to me I do not always understand very clearly. All the same, I said confidently, "That will be very pretty;" and I already imagined myself on the fine gravel of the paths, admiring my husband's work, a lovely bit of white

marble standing out against the green hanging, while people behind me whispered, "The sculptor's wife."

At last, being curious to see how we were getting along with our Roman lady, it occurred to me one day to go and surprise him at his studio, which I had not then seen. It was one of my first experiments in going out alone, and I made myself beautiful, I tell you! When I arrived I found the door opening into the little garden, on the ground-floor, wide open. So I went right in, and you can imagine my indignation when I saw my husband, in a white blouse, like a mason, with hair awry and hands all smeared with dirt, and facing him, my dear, a woman, a tall creature, standing on a three-legged stool, hardly clothed at all, and as unconcerned in that guise as if she found it perfectly natural. The whole of her wretched outfit, covered with mud, walking boots, a round hat with a feather all out of curl, were tossed on a chair by her side. I saw it all in a flash, for you can guess whether I ran away. Étienne tried to speak to me, to detain me, but I made a gesture of horror at sight of his clayey hands, and I hurried away to mamma's house, where I arrived more dead than alive. You can picture the scene when I appeared.

"Ah! *mon Dieu!* my child, what is the matter?"

I told mamma what I had seen, how that horrible woman was dressed, in what costume. And I cried and cried. Mamma was deeply moved and tried to comfort me; she explained that it must have been a model.

"What? why, it's abominable! He said nothing to me about such things before we were married."

Thereupon Étienne arrived in dire dismay, and tried in his turn to make me understand that a model is not a woman like other women, and that sculptors cannot do without them; but these reasons did not convince me, and I declared formally that I would have none of a husband who passed his days *tête-à-tête* with young women in that garb.

"Let us see, my dear," said poor mamma, struggling hard to adjust everything, "could n't you, out of regard for your wife, replace this woman by a make-believe, a pasteboard figure?"

My husband gnawed his moustache with rage.

"Why, it's impossible, my dear mamma."

"Still, it does seem to me, my dear fellow — you know, our milliners have pasteboard heads that they use to show bonnets on. Now, if they do it for the head, could n't you do it for — "

It seemed that it was not possible. At all events that is what Étienne tried at great length to prove to us, with all sorts of details and technical words. He really seemed very unhappy. I watched him out of the corner of my eye as I wiped away my tears, and I saw that my suffering distressed him terribly. At last, after an interminable discussion, it was agreed that, since the model was indispensable, I should be present whenever she came. There was a very convenient little closet adjoining the studio, where I could see without being seen. It is a shameful thing, you will say, to be jealous of such creatures and to show one's jealousy. But

you see, my love, one must have passed through such emotions to be able to talk about them.

The model was to come the next day. So I took my courage in both hands and installed myself in my little box, with the express understanding that, at the faintest tap on the partition, my husband was to come to me at once. I was hardly in my seat when the wretched model of the day before arrived, trussed up God knows how, and with such a poverty-stricken aspect that I asked myself how I could have been jealous of a woman who goes about the streets without white cuffs and with an old shawl with green fringe. Well, my dear, when I saw that creature drop her shawl and her dress in the middle of the studio, disrobe herself in such a free-and-easy, immodest way, it produced an effect on me which I cannot describe. Indignation choked me. I knocked hastily on the partition. Étienne came. I was pale and trembling. He laughed at me, reassured me very gently, and went back to his work. Now the woman was standing, half-naked, her long hair unbound and falling down her back in a heavy, gleaming mass. She was no longer the vile creature of a moment before, but almost a statue already, despite her worn and vulgar mien. I had a tight feeling at my heart. However, I said nothing. Suddenly I heard my husband exclaim: "The left leg. Put out the left leg." And, as the model did not understand, he walked up to her, and — Ah! I could n't stand that. I knocked. He did n't hear me. I knocked again, frantically. That time he

ran to me, frowning slightly in the excitement of his work.

"Come, come, Armande — do be reasonable!" And I, weeping bitterly, laid my head on his shoulder: "It's too much for me, my dear. I can't — I cannot — "

Thereupon, without answering, he turned abruptly, went back to the studio and made a sign to that fright of a woman, who dressed and went away.

For several days Étienne did not go to his studio. He stayed at home with me, never went out, refused to see his friends; he was perfectly pleasant all the time, but his manner was so dejected. Once I asked him very timidly, "Aren't you going to work any more?" which called forth this reply, "A man can't work without a model." I had not the courage to insist, for I realized how guilty I was, and that he had the right to bear me a grudge. However, by dint of caresses and endearments, I induced him to promise to return to his studio and try to finish his statue by — what do they call it? — by *chic*, that is to say, by imagination; mamma's way, in fact. I thought it a very easy matter, but the poor fellow had a hard time of it. Every night he came home worn out and discouraged, almost ill. I went often to see him, to cheer him up. I always said, "It is charming." But as a matter of fact the statue made little progress. I am not even sure that he worked on it. When I arrived I always found him smoking on his couch, or else rolling little

pellets of clay, which he threw savagely against the wall.

One afternoon when I was there looking at the poor Roman lady, half-modelled, who was so long about leaving her bath, a wild idea passed through my mind. The Roman was about my height; perhaps on a pinch I might—

"What do you call a pretty leg?" I suddenly asked my husband.

He explained the point at great length, pointing out what his statue still lacked, and what he could not succeed in giving it without a model. Poor boy! he said it with such a heart-broken air. What do you suppose I did? Faith, for better or worse, I simply picked up the drapery that lay in a corner and stepped into my box; then, without a word, while he was still gazing at his statue, I softly took my place on the platform in front of him, in the costume and attitude in which I had seen that horrid model. Ah! my love, such emotion as he showed when he raised his head! I longed to laugh and to cry. I was as red as fire. And that infernal muslin must be redraped everywhere. Never mind! Étienne seemed so overjoyed that I was soon reassured. Just fancy, my dear; to hear him talk—

IX.

A GREAT MAN'S WIDOW.

WHEN it was reported that she was to marry again, no one was surprised. Despite all his genius, perhaps even because of his genius, the great man had for fifteen years led her a very hard life, interspersed with caprices, with sensational crotchets, which sometimes attracted the attention of Paris. On the high-road to renown, over which he had passed in triumph and at great speed, like those who are destined to die young, she had followed him, humble and shrinking, crouching in a corner of the chariot, and always on the lookout for accidents. When she complained, relations, friends, everybody was against her. "Respect his foibles," they would say, "they are the foibles of a god. Do not vex him, do not disturb him. Remember that your husband is not yours only. He belongs to the country, to art, much more than to the family. And who can say that every one of these faults of which you complain is not the source of some sublime work?" At last, however, exhausted by her enforced patience, she had fits of rebellion, of indignation, so that, when the great man died, they were on the point of appearing in court on a petition for

a judicial separation, and of dragging their noble and illustrious name through the mire on the third page of the scandal-mongering newspapers.

After the agitation of that ill-starred union, the anxiety of the last illness, and the sudden shock of her husband's death, which had rekindled for a moment her former affection, the first three months of her widowhood had upon the young woman the salutary, restful effect of a season at the baths. The forced retirement, the tranquil charm of assuaged grief gave her at twenty-five a second youth almost as fascinating as the first. Moreover, black was very becoming to her; and she assumed the serious, somewhat haughty demeanor of a woman left alone in life with all the honor of a great name to bear. Jealous beyond measure of the dead man's renown, that accursed renown which had cost her so many tears and which was growing greater from day to day like a gorgeous flower nourished by the black soil of the grave, she appeared, enveloped in her long, gloomy weeds, at the offices of theatrical managers and publishers, negotiating for the reproduction of her husband's operas, superintending the publication of his posthumous works and unfinished manuscripts, and bringing to all these details a sort of solemn solicitude and as it were the respect inspired by a place of sanctuary.

It was at this period that her second husband met her. He too was a musician, almost unknown, the author of divers waltzes and ballads and of two operettas, which were neither sold nor acted

to any appreciable extent, although they had been printed in most attractive style. With a pleasant face and a handsome fortune, which he inherited from an extremely bourgeois family, his most prominent characteristics were, an exalted respect for glory, curiosity concerning celebrated men, and the enthusiastic innocence of artists who are still young. And so, when the master's wife was pointed out to him, his head swam. It was as if the image of the glorious muse had appeared to him. He fell in love at once, and as the widow was beginning to go into society to some extent, he obtained an introduction to her house. There his passion fed upon the atmosphere of genius which still hovered in all the corners of the salon. There was the bust of the master, the piano at which he composed, his scores, scattered about over all the furniture, melodious even to the sight, as if the written phrases came forth in music from their open sheets. The undeniable fascination of the widow, planted amid the memories of that austere past as in a becoming frame, put the finishing touch to his passion.

After hesitating a long while the excellent youth ended by declaring his love, but in the most humble, timid terms. He knew of how little consequence he was in her eyes; he understood how she must regret exchanging her illustrious name for his, — an unknown, plebeian name, — and innumerable other ingenuous deliverances of this sort. In the bottom of her heart the lady was much flattered by her conquest, but she played the

comedy of the broken heart, and assumed the scornful, surfeited airs of the woman whose life is ended, with no hope of beginning anew. She, who had never been so tranquil as since her great man's death, still found tears with which to regret his loss, and was able to speak of him with enthusiastic warmth. All this, of course, simply inflamed her youthful adorer, and made him more eloquent, more persuasive.

To make a long story short, this stern widowhood ended with a marriage; but the widow did not abdicate, and, although married, was more than ever the great man's widow, fully realizing that therein lay her real prestige in her second husband's eyes. As she felt less youthful than he, she prevented him from noticing it by overwhelming him with disdain, with a sort of vague compassion, of unexpressed but stinging regret because of her mésalliance. But he was not wounded; far from it, — he was so persuaded of his inferiority, and thought it so natural that the memory of such a man should be despotically enthroned in her heart! To maintain him in that attitude of humility, she sometimes read over with him the letters the master wrote her when he was paying court to her. This return to the past made her fifteen years younger, gave her the self-assurance of a beautiful, beloved woman, viewed through all the amorous dithyrambs, the delicious exaggeration of written passion. If she had changed since, her young husband was little disturbed by the change, adored her on the strength of another's word,

and derived a strange, indefinable sort of vanity therefrom. It seemed to him that those impassioned entreaties added to the force of his own, and that he was the inheritor of a whole past of love.

Strange couple! They were an interesting spectacle in society. I saw them occasionally at the theatre. No one would have recognized the shrinking, timid young woman who used to accompany the *maëstro*, lost in the gigantic shadow which he cast all about him. Now she sat erect at the front of the box and attracted all eyes by the proud gleam in her own. One would have said that she wore about her head her first husband's halo, while his name echoed all about her by way of homage or of reproof. The other, seated a little farther back, with the intense expression of the sacrificed ones of life, watched her every movement, awaiting an opportunity to wait upon her.

In their home this curious relation was even more marked. I remember an evening party that they gave a year after they were married. The husband circulated among his guests, proud, yet a little embarrassed, to have so many people in his house. The wife, disdainful, melancholy, superior, was on that occasion the great man's widow to the last degree. She had a certain way of glancing at her husband over her shoulder, of calling him "my poor dear" as she overwhelmed him with ungrateful duties, as if to say, "You are good for nothing but that." About her clustered the circle

of intimate friends of the earlier time, of those who had been present at the master's brilliant beginnings, his struggles, his triumphs. With them she simpered, played the young girl. They had known her when she was so young! Almost all of them called her by her Christian name, "Anaïs." It was like a gathering of artists, which the poor husband approached respectfully to hear his predecessor discussed. They recalled the glorious *first nights*, those nights of battle, almost always won; and the great man's manias, for instance, his insisting that his wife should be beside him, in full dress, *décolletée*, when he was at work, in order to bring inspiration. "Do you remember, Anaïs?" and Anaïs sighed and blushed.

His beautiful love plays dated from that period, *Savonarole* particularly, the most passionate of all, with its great duo interspersed with moonbeams, the perfume of roses, and the song of the nightingale. An enthusiast played it on the piano, amid contemplative emotion. At the last note of that admirable passage, the lady burst into tears. "That is too much for me," she said. "I have never been able to listen to it without weeping." The master's old friends, encompassing his unhappy widow with their sympathetic condolence, came forward in turn as at funeral ceremonies, to give her a tremulous clasp of the hand.

"Come, come, Anaïs, be brave."

And the most amusing thing was to see the second husband, standing beside his wife, with a deeply moved, pathetic air, distributing hand-

clasps, and appropriating his share of the expressions of condolence.

"What a genius! what a genius!" he said, mopping his eyes. It was at once comical and touching.

X.

THE LIAR.

"I HAVE never loved but one woman in my life," said D—— the painter to us one day. "I passed with her five years of perfect happiness, of tranquil and fruitful joys. I may say that I owe to her my present celebrity; work was so easy to me, inspiration so natural at her side. The moment I first met her it seemed to me as if she had always been mine. Her beauty and her character fulfilled all my dreams. That woman never left me; she died in my house, in my arms, loving me to the end. But when I think of her it is with anger. If I try to represent her as I saw her for five years, in all the radiance of her love, with her tall, lithe figure, her golden pallor, the features of an Oriental Jewess, regular and delicate in the slightly puffy face, her slow speech, as smooth and velvety as her glance, — if I seek to give body to that delicious vision, it is only that I may say to her with the more force, 'I hate you!'

"Her name was Clotilde. In the friend's house where we met, she was known by the name of Madame Deloche, and she was said to be the widow of a sea-captain who made long voyages. She had, in fact, the appearance of having travelled

say laughingly that she was richer than I; and in truth her lessons must have been profitable, for she always dressed with costly refinement, and the plain black in which she clothed herself with coquettish regard for her complexion and her type of beauty, was of dull velvets, glistening satin and jet, clouds of silky laces, wherein the wondering eye discovered beneath an apparent simplicity whole worlds of feminine cunning in the myriad reflections of a single color.

"However, there was nothing painful in her profession, she said. All her pupils, daughters of bankers or brokers, adored her and respected her; and more than once she showed me a bracelet or a ring which had been given her in acknowledgment of her painstaking services. Except as our work required, we were never parted; we went nowhere. On Sundays, however, she went to Saint-Germain to see her sister, the head-keeper's wife, to whom she had become reconciled some time before. I went with her to the station. She always returned the same evening, and frequently, during the summer, we arranged to meet at some station in the suburbs, on the bank of the river or in the woods. She would tell me about her visit, how well the children looked and what a happy family it seemed to be. That made my heart ache for her, deprived forever of genuine family joys, and I redoubled my affection, in order to make her forget her false position, which must have been a cruel trial to such a heart as hers.

"What a happy time of work and confidence!

I had no suspicions. All that she said seemed so true, so natural. I reproached her for but one thing. Sometimes when she spoke of the houses to which she went, of the families of her pupils, she would pour forth an abundance of fancied details, of imaginary intrigues, which she would persist in inventing in spite of all I could say. Calm as she was, she saw romance in everything about her, and her life passed in dramatic combinations. These chimeras disturbed my felicity. To me, who would have liked to hide from the rest of the world and live alone with her, it seemed that she devoted too much attention to indifferent matters. But I could readily pardon that failing in a young and unfortunate woman, whose life thus far had been a sad romance with no probability of a happy ending.

"Once only I had a suspicion, or rather a presentiment. One Sunday night she did not come home. I was in despair. What was I to do? Go to Saint-Germain? I might compromise her reputation. However, after a ghastly night, I had just determined to start, when she appeared, very pale and very much disturbed in mind. Her sister was ill, she had had to remain to take care of her. I believed what she told me, nor were my suspicions aroused by that flood of words, overflowing at the slightest question, forever drowning the principal idea beneath a mass of useless details: the hour of her arrival, a rude railway employé, a delayed train. Two or three times that week she went to Saint-Germain for the night; then, her sister having

recovered, she resumed her regular and peaceful life.

"Unfortunately, not long after, it came her own turn to fall sick. One day she returned from her lessons trembling, feverish, drenched with perspiration. Inflammation of the lungs set in, serious at the outset, and very soon — so the doctor told me — beyond hope. I was almost mad with grief. Then I thought of nothing but making her last hours happier. I would bring her family, that family she loved so dearly and was so proud of, to her death-bed. Without saying anything to her, I wrote first of all to her sister at Saint-Germain, and I went in person to see her uncle, the Chief Rabbi. I don't know at what unearthly hour I appeared there. Great catastrophes derange life to its lowest depths and in its most trivial details. I believe that the excellent Rabbi was dining. He came to me in dire alarm, receiving me in the antechamber.

"His venerable face turned toward me with an expression of intense astonishment.

"I said: —

"'Your niece is dying.'

"'My niece! Why, I have no niece; you are mistaken.'

"'Oh! I implore you, monsieur, forget these foolish family quarrels. I speak of Madame Deloche, the captain's wife —'

"'I do not know any Madame Deloche. You are mistaken in your man, my child, I assure you.'

"And he gently edged me toward the door, taking

me for a sharper or a lunatic. I must have cut a very strange figure, in truth. What I had learned was so unexpected, so terrible! So she had lied to me. Why? Suddenly an idea came to my mind. I gave orders to be driven to the address of one of her pupils of whom she was constantly talking, the daughter of a well-known banker.

"I said to the servant, 'Madame Deloche?'

"'She is n't here.'

"'Yes, I know. She 's the lady who gives lessons on the piano to your young ladies.'

"'We have no young ladies in our house, monsieur, not even a piano. I don't know what you mean.'

"And he angrily closed the door in my face.

"I pursued my investigations no farther. I was sure of meeting with the same reply, the same disappointment everywhere. As I entered our poor little house, some one handed me a letter postmarked Saint-Germain. I opened it, knowing beforehand what it contained. The head-keeper did n't know Madame Deloche. Moreover, he had neither wife nor child.

"That was the last stroke. So every word of hers for five long years had been a lie! A thousand jealous thoughts seized me on the instant; and, unconscious of what I was doing, I rushed frantically into the room where she lay dying. All the questions which were torturing me fell together upon that bed of pain: 'What did you go to Saint-Germain for on Sundays? With whom did you pass your days? Where did you sleep

those nights? Come, answer me!' And I leaned over her, seeking in the depths of her still proud and lovely eyes the answers which I awaited in an agony of dread; but she remained silent, impassive.

"I continued, trembling with rage: 'You did not give lessons; I have been everywhere. No one knows you. Where did you get all that money, then, and the laces and jewels?' She glanced at me, a glance of heartrending distress, and that was all. Really I ought to have spared her, to have let her die in peace. But I had loved her too dearly. Jealousy was stronger than pity. I continued: 'You have deceived me for five years. You have lied to me every day, every hour. You have known my whole life and I have known nothing of yours. Nothing, not even your name. For the name you bear is not yours, is it? Oh! the liar! the liar! To think that she is dying and that I do not know by what name to call her. Tell me, who are you? Whence do you come? Why did you force yourself into my life? Speak to me, I say! Tell me something!'

"In vain! Instead of replying, she turned painfully to the wall, as if she feared that her last glance would betray her secret. And in that position she died, the miserable wretch! — died, concealing her face from me, a liar to the end."

XI.

COMTESSE IRMA.

"MONSIEUR Charles d'Athis, man of letters, has the honor to inform you of the birth of his son Robert.

"The child is well."

About ten years ago all literary and artistic Paris received a copy of this notice, on satin paper, bearing the crest of the Comtes d'Athis, the last of whom, Charles d'Athis, had succeeded — young as he was — in earning genuine celebrity as a poet.

"The child is well."

And the mother? Oh! the note did not mention her. Everybody knew her too well. She was the daughter of an old poacher of Seine-et-Oise, a former model named Irma Sallé, whose portrait had passed through all the exhibitions as the original had passed through all the studios. Her low forehead, her lip raised at the corners *à l'antique*, that fortuitous reproduction of primitive lives in a peasant-woman's face, — a keeper of turkeys with Grecian features, — the slightly tanned complexion due to a childhood passed in the open air, which gives to light hair a reflection as of pale silk, gave to that hussy a sort of uncivilized originality which was made complete by a pair of eyes

of a magnificent green, buried beneath dense eyebrows.

One night, on leaving the *bal de l'Opéra*, d'Athis had taken her to supper, and the supper lasted two years. But, although Irma had entered completely into the poet's life, this aristocratically insolent note shows plainly enough how little place she occupied there. In fact, in that temporary household the woman was little more than an upper servant, bringing to the management of the poet-nobleman's house the asperity of her twofold nature of peasant and courtesan, and doing her utmost, regardless of cost, to make herself indispensable. Too boorish and too stupid ever to have any comprehension of d'Athis's genius, of those lovely verses, polished and worldly, which made of him a sort of Parisian Tennyson, she had been shrewd enough none the less to submit to all his disdain, to all his demands, as if, at the bottom of that vulgar nature, there had remained a little of the grovelling admiration of the peasant for the nobleman, of the vassal for her lord. The birth of the child simply emphasized her nullity in the house.

When the dowager Comtesse d'Athis-Mons, the poet's mother, a person of the highest distinction in the most exalted society, learned that a grandson had been born to her, a pretty little viscount, well and duly acknowledged by the author of his being, she desired to see and embrace him. Unquestionably it was hard for one who had formerly been reader to Queen Marie-Amélie to think that

the heir of so great a name had such a mother; but, taking courage from the form of the little notes announcing the child's birth, the old lady forgot that creature's existence. She chose for her visits to her grandson at his nurse's, days when she was sure of meeting nobody; she gloated over him, petted him, took him into her heart, made him her idol, with that last love of grandmothers which furnishes them with an excuse for living a few years longer in order to watch the growth of the little ones.

Then, when the baby viscount was a little bigger and had left his nurse to live with his father and mother, as the countess could not abandon her cherished visits, an agreement was entered into: when the grandmother rang the bell, Irma submissively and silently disappeared; or else the child was taken to its grandmother's; and, being equally spoiled by both mothers, it loved one as much as the other, and was astonished to notice in the violence of their caresses a determination to monopolize him, to exclude the other from his affection. The heedless d'Athis, preoccupied with his verses, with his growing renown, contented himself with worshipping his little Robert, talking to everybody about him, and imagining that the child belonged to him, to him alone. This illusion was of brief duration.

"I would like to see you married," his mother said to him one day.

"Yes — but the child?"

"Have no fear. I have discovered a young

from time to time, in his father's presence: "Do you remember grandpa Sallé's hens? Would you like to go and see them again?" And by that constant threat of departure, she paved the way for the definitive step of marriage.

It took her five years to become a countess; but at last she succeeded. One day the poet went in fear and trembling to inform his mother that he had decided to marry his mistress, and the old lady, instead of losing her temper, welcomed the calamity as a deliverance, seeing but one thing in the proposed step, namely the possibility of returning to her son's house and loving her little Robert to her heart's content. In fact the grandmother enjoyed the real honeymoon. D'Athis, after his impulsive act, preferred to absent himself from Paris for a while. He felt embarrassed there. And as the child, clinging to his mother's skirts, ruled the whole house, they took up their quarters in Irma's country, near Père Sallé's hens. It was surely the most curious, most ill-assorted household that can be imagined. Grandmamma d'Athis and grandpapa Sallé met every night by their grandson's bedside. The old poacher, with his short black pipe stuck in the corner of his mouth, and the former reader at the Château, with her powdered hair and her grand manners, stood side by side watching the lovely child rolling on the carpet at their feet, and were equally devoted to him. One brought him all the newest, the most gorgeous, most expensive toys from Paris; the other made him magnificent whistles from bits of

elderwood; and, on my word, the dauphin hesitated between them.

Among all these beings grouped as if by force around a cradle, the only really miserable one was Charles d'Athis. His delicate Parisian inspiration was impaired by this life in the heart of the woods, like those frail Parisian ladies who cannot endure the fresh and invigorating air of the country. He did not work, and at so great a distance from that pitiless Paris, which closes its gates so quickly on the absent, he felt that he was already forgotten. Luckily the child was there, and when the child smiled the father ceased to think of his triumphs as a poet and of Irma Sallé's past.

And now, do you wish to know the dénoûment of this strange drama? Read the little black-edged note which I received a few days ago, and which forms, so to speak, the last page of this Parisian episode: —

"M. le Comte and Mme. la Comtesse d'Athis grieve to announce the death of their son Robert."

The poor creatures! Can you not see them, all four, glaring at one another about that empty cradle?

XII.

THE CONFIDENCES OF A COAT EMBROIDERED WITH GREEN PALM-LEAVES.

THAT morning was the morning of a glorious day for Guillardin the sculptor.

Chosen the day before a member of the Institute, he was about to christen, in presence of the five academies assembled in solemn conclave, his academician's coat, a superb coat with green palm-leaves, glistening with the sheen of new broadcloth and the silky embroidery of the color of hope. The blessed coat was spread out on a chair, all ready to be worn, and Guillardin gazed fondly at it as he finished tying his black cravat.

"Above all things, I must not hurry, I have plenty of time," thought the good man.

The fact was that in his feverish impatience he had dressed himself two hours too soon; and the fair Madame Guillardin — who was always a trifle long at her toilet — had informed him that on that day of all others she would not be ready until the precise hour; not one minute earlier, you understand!

Unhappy Guillardin! what could he do to kill the intervening time?

"Let's try on the coat," he said to himself, and he raised the precious garment gently, as if he

were handling tulle, and, having put it on with infinite precautions, he went and stood in front of his mirror. Ah! the graceful image that the mirror displayed to him! Such a charming little academician, newly hatched, plump, happy, smiling, grizzly, corpulent, with arms all too short, which had a stiff and automatic sort of dignity in the new sleeves. Evidently satisfied with his appearance, Guillardin walked up and down the room, bowed as if he were entering the meeting, smiled at his colleagues of the Beaux-Arts, assumed academic attitudes. But, however proud one may be of one's person, one cannot stand for two hours in full dress before a mirror. Our academician became weary at last, and, being afraid that he should rumple his coat, he concluded to take it off and carefully replace it on a chair. He himself sat down facing it, at the other side of the fireplace; then, stretching out his legs and folding his hands over his state waistcoat, he began to muse ecstatically, gazing at his green coat.

As the traveller who has finally reached the end of his journey loves to recall its dangers and difficulties, so Guillardin reviewed his life year by year, from the day when he began to try his hand at sculpture in the Jouffroy studio. Ah! the first years are hard in that infernal profession. He remembered the winters without fire, the sleepless nights, the running about in search of work, and the dull rage you feel at the thought that you are an infinitesimal atom, lost, unknown, in the vast crowd that pushes you, jostles you, throws you

down, and crushes you. And to think that he had been able, unaided, without patronage or fortune, to extricate himself from that slough! Solely by talent, monsieur! And, with his head thrown back, his eyes half-closed, plunged in blissful contemplation, the excellent man repeated aloud to himself: —

"Simply by my talent. Simply by my talent!"

A burst of laughter, dry and cracked like the laugh of a very old man, suddenly interrupted him. Guillardin, a little startled, glanced all around the room. He was alone, quite alone, *tête-à-tête* with his green coat, that academician's shadow solemnly spread out before him on the other side of the fire. And yet the insolent laughter continued. Thereupon the sculptor, looking a little more closely, fancied that he could see that his coat was no longer where he had put it, but was actually seated in the chair, with its skirts raised, its two sleeves resting on the arms, and its chest inflated with an appearance of life. And — a most extraordinary thing! — it was the coat that was laughing. Yes, it was that strange green coat from which proceeded those frantic bursts of laughter, which shook it, twisted it, made it tremble, made its skirts dance up and down, and at times brought its two sleeves toward its sides as if to check that supernaturally excessive and inextinguishable hilarity. At the same time he heard a sharp, spiteful little voice exclaim between two gasps: "*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* how it hurts me to laugh! how it hurts me to laugh like this!"

"Who in the devil is that, anyway?" asked the bewildered academician, opening his eyes wide.

The voice replied, sharper and more spiteful than before: "Why, it's I, Monsieur Guillardin, it's I, your green coat with the palms, waiting for you to go to the meeting. I ask your pardon for interrupting your musings so unseasonably; but really it was so amusing to hear you talk about your talent! I could n't restrain myself. Tell me, did you mean that? Do you, in all conscience, believe that your talent is sufficient to carry you so far and so high with such speed, to give you all you have: honors, position, fame, fortune? Do you believe that is possible, Guillardin? Search your own heart, my friend, before you answer. Search again, again! Now answer me. You see that you dare not."

"But," stammered Guillardin with comical hesitation, "I have — I have worked hard."

"Yes, very hard, tremendously hard. You are a plodder, a mechanic, a great doer of tasks. You reckon your days by the hour like a cabman. But the spark of genius, my dear fellow, the golden bee that flies through the brain of the genuine artist, shedding there the radiance and humming of its wings — when did it pay you a visit? Never once, as you well know. The divine little bee has always frightened you. And yet, it alone gives real talent. Ah! I know other men who work, but very differently from you, with all the feverish restlessness of investigators, and who will never reach the point you have reached.

Come! let us agree upon this, while we are alone; your talent consists in having married a pretty woman."

"Monsieur!" exclaimed Guillardin, red as a beet.

The voice continued unmoved:—

"Well, well! That indignation pleases me. It proves, what everybody knows by the way, that you are more fool than knave. There, there! you need not roll your eyes at me so savagely. In the first place, if you touch me, if there is a simple false fold or crease in me, it 's impossible for you to attend the meeting; and Madame Guillardin would not like that. For, after all, it is she who reaps all the glory of this great day. It is she whom the five academies are to receive in a little while; and I promise you that, if I should appear at the Institute upon her graceful figure, — still erect and slender despite her age — I should cause a much greater sensation than on you. What the devil! Monsieur Guillardin, you must look things in the face! You owe that woman everything; everything, — your fine house, your forty thousand francs a year, your crosses, your laurel wreaths, your medals."

And with a wooden gesture the green coat called the poor fellow's attention with its embroidered sleeve to the glorious trophies hanging on the wall of his alcove. Then, as if it were his purpose to assume all possible aspects and attitudes, the better to torment his victim, the cruel coat moved its chair toward the fireplace and, leaning forward

with a confidential air, continued familiarly, in a tone denoting an intimacy of long standing: —

"Well, old man, what I say seems to give you pain. But it is best that you should know what all the world knows. And who should tell you, if not your coat? Come! let us reason a bit. What did you have when you married? Nothing. What did your wife bring you? Zero. Then how do you account for your present fortune? You will tell me again that you have worked hard. But I tell you that, by working day and night, with special privileges, with orders from the government, which you certainly have not lacked since your marriage, you have never earned more than fifteen thousand francs a year. Do you think that that was enough to run an establishment like yours? Remember that the fair Madame Guillardin has always been classed among the women of fashion, that she has been prominent in all the social sets where money is spent freely. *Parbleu!* I am well aware that, walled up in your studio as you are from morning till night, you have never thought about these things. You have been content to say to your friends: 'I have a wife who is a perfect marvel for understanding business. With what I earn, she makes out to save money, even with such an establishment as ours!'

"You are the marvel, poor man. The truth is that you married one of those pretty monsters of whom there are many in Paris, an ambitious, dissolute woman, serious for your benefit and frivolous on her own account, capable of managing

your affairs and her own pleasure at the same time. The lives of such women, my dear fellow, resemble orders of dances at a ball, on which you put figures beside the names of your partners. Your wife argued thus: 'My husband has no talent, no fortune, and is not very good-looking either; but he's an excellent fellow, obliging, gullible, and as little in the way as possible. If he will allow me to amuse myself in peace, I will undertake to supply him with all he needs.' And from that day, money, orders, decorations of all countries began to rain down into your studio with their pleasant metallic jingle, their ribbons of all colors. — Look at my buttons. — Then one morning madame was assailed by a longing — the longing of a mature woman — to be the wife of an academician, and it was her daintily gloved hand that opened to you one by one the doors of the sanctuary. *Dame!* old man, your colleagues alone could tell you what it has cost you to wear the green palm-leaves."

"You lie, you lie!" cried Guillardin, choking with indignation.

"Oh! no, old man, I don't lie. You have only to look about when you enter the meeting. You will see mischief lurking in every eye, a smile playing about every mouth, while people will whisper as you pass, 'There's the lovely Madame Guillardin's husband!' For you will never be anything else while you live, my dear fellow, than a pretty woman's husband."

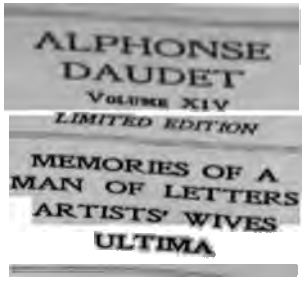
Guillardin could restrain himself no longer.

White with rage, he rushed forward to seize that insolent, doting garment and hurl it into the fire, after removing its lovely green garland; but at that moment a door opened, and a well-known voice, with a slight inflection of disdain and condescension, woke him most opportunely from his horrible dream: —

"Ah! that is just like you, upon my word! — to fall asleep by the fire on such a day!"

Madame Guillardin stood before him, tall and still fair, albeit a little too imposing with her almost natural pink complexion under her powdered hair, and the exaggerated brilliancy of her painted eyes. With the gesture of a master-spirit she raised the coat with the green palm-leaves, and briskly, with a faint smile, assisted her husband to put it on, while the poor man, still drenched with the perspiration caused by his nightmare, drew a long breath with an air of relief, and said to himself, "What bliss! — it was a dream!"

THE END.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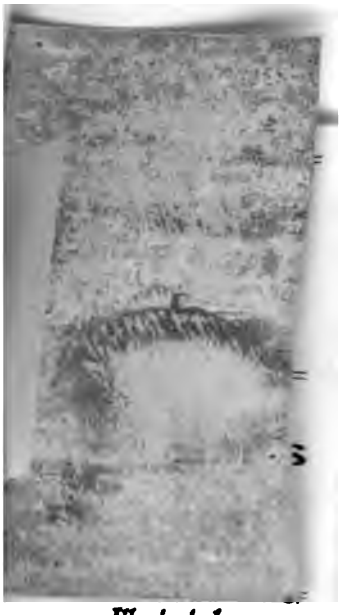

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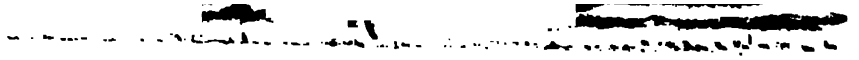

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